



January 17, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar  
 Secretary  
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
 200 Independence Avenue, SW  
 Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

The undersigned organizations represent more than one hundred million Americans living with chronic or serious health conditions, including many who rely on Medicaid as their primary source of healthcare coverage. Together and separately, our non-profit, non-partisan organizations are dedicated to working with the Administration, members of Congress, and State Governments on a bipartisan basis to ensure that coverage is affordable, accessible and adequate for the patients we represent.

Our organizations write to you today to request a meeting to discuss concerns our organizations have had with a number of the policies being implemented by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding the Medicaid program.

The purpose of Medicaid is to provide healthcare for low-income individuals and families. Over the last two and a half years, many of our organizations have reached out to CMS regarding our concerns with policies included in the Administration's guidance to states and approvals of Section 1115 demonstration waivers that would create substantial barriers to care for patients and families, including the work and community engagement requirements outlined in CMS Administrator Verma's letter to state Medicaid directors in January 2019.<sup>1</sup>

Our organizations are similarly concerned about the block grant proposal put forward by the state of Tennessee and its potential impact on the patients and consumers we represent. Using Section 1115 waivers for block grant or per capita cap proposals could lead states to limit enrollment, reduce benefits, increase cost-sharing or make other changes that jeopardize patients' access to care in the Medicaid program. Our organizations do not believe that CMS and HHS have adequately considered these negative and serious ramifications. Simply put, block grants and per capita caps will reduce access to quality and affordable healthcare for patients with serious and chronic health conditions and are therefore unacceptable to our organizations.

Because of the dramatic, negative impact that work and community engagement requirements, block grants and per capita caps would have on the patients we represent, our organizations have requested since July of 2018 to schedule a meeting with Administrator Verma to share our concerns but have not yet secured such an opportunity to engage with the Administrator.<sup>2,3</sup> We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns about these proposals and seek alignment on ways we can work together to strengthen the Medicaid program. Erika Sward with the American Lung Association ([Erika.Sward@Lung.org](mailto:Erika.Sward@Lung.org); 202-715-3451) is the point of contact for our organizations and will be happy to work with your staff to find a mutually convenient time to meet.

Sincerely,

American Diabetes Association

American Kidney Fund

American Liver Foundation

American Lung Association

Arthritis Foundation

Chronic Disease Coalition

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Epilepsy Foundation

Family Voices

Hemophilia Federation of America

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Lutheran Services in America

March of Dimes

Mended Little Hearts

Muscular Dystrophy Association

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Hemophilia Foundation

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

National Organization for Rare Disorders

National Patient Advocate Foundation

National Psoriasis Foundation

Pulmonary Hypertension Association

Susan G. Komen

United Way Worldwide

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Administrator Verma Re: Work Requirement Policies, May 14, 2018, Available at <http://www.lung.org/assets/documents/advocacy-archive/letter-to-cms-admin-re-medicaid-work-req.pdf>; Letter to Administrator Verma Re: Kentucky Decision, July 24, 2018, Available at: <https://www.lung.org/assets/documents/advocacy-archive/partners-letter-to-cms-re-ky-1115-decision.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Administrator Verma Re: Kentucky Decision, July 24, 2018, Available at: <https://www.lung.org/assets/documents/advocacy-archive/partners-letter-to-cms-re-ky-1115-decision.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Administrator Verma Re: Medicaid Block Grants, July 18, 2019, Available at: <https://www.lung.org/assets/documents/advocacy-archive/health-partner-letter-to-cms-1.pdf>