



May 12, 2020

The Honorable Rodney Davis
1740 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Davis:

On behalf of the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC), I am writing to express our support for legislation addressing the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) federal premium subsidy for workers who lose healthcare coverage due to loss of a job or a reduction in hours during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Thank you for introducing this important legislation that would establish a 30 day special enrollment period for health plans on the exchange, provide premium assistance for COBRA benefits, and for other purposes.

HLC is a coalition of chief executives from all disciplines within American healthcare. It is the exclusive forum for the nation's healthcare leaders to jointly develop policies, plans, and programs to achieve their vision of a 21st century healthcare system that makes affordable high-quality care accessible to all Americans. Members of HLC – hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, laboratories, biotech firms, health product distributors, post-acute care providers, home care providers, and information technology companies – advocate for measures to increase the quality and efficiency of healthcare through a patient-centered approach.

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to impact American employers across the country, many individuals are losing their employer-sponsored health insurance due to loss of a job or a reduction in hours. As you are aware, federal premium assistance subsidies were provided in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and Congress extended the program into 2010. For workers eligible for continued health coverage under COBRA, and similar federal and state laws, subsidies were provided to help cover the cost of coverage. COBRA provided stability for working families who were able to preserve their existing health coverage and continuity of care with the network of doctors, hospitals, and other providers in their health plan. As the nation's top health officials continuously encourage people to seek medical care when they suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19, it is imperative to maintain continuity of care. Further, disruptions in continuity of coverage have the unintended consequence of forcing beneficiaries to start over with new deductibles that must be met, even though they have already paid towards or met their deductibles for their current plan year, further aggravating financial instability.

Like you, HLC believes beneficiaries cannot cover additional costs associated with healthcare due to a loss of employer-sponsored health insurance. Employers will need tools to bring people back onto payroll and provide employer-sponsored health insurance. It is important that workers be able to maintain health coverage during this healthcare crisis.

Thank you again for your work on strengthening access to coverage and care for American families during the COVID-19 pandemic. HLC looks forward to continuing to collaborate with you on this important issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Debbie Witchey at (202) 449-3435 or dwitchey@hlc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary R. Grealy".

Mary R. Grealy
President

Cc:

The Honorable Kendra Horn
The Honorable Anthony Gonzalez
The Honorable Kurt Schrader
The Honorable Xochitl Torres Small
The Honorable Ann Wagner