



May 22, 2019

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Chairman
U.S. House Budget Committee
402 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Womack
Ranking Member
U.S. House Budget Committee
2412 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack:

As the committee prepares to conduct a hearing on “Key Design Components and Considerations for Establishing a Single-Payer Health Care System,” I am writing on behalf of the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) to express significant concerns regarding a single payer healthcare system.

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.

Like you, HLC believes all Americans should have access to affordable coverage of high-quality healthcare. However, a single payer healthcare system such as Medicare-For-All is not a practical solution. In fact, polling shows Americans are not seeking a radical overhaul of our healthcare system, nor would they be better off should it occur.

The most striking aspect of a single payer healthcare system is not what it gives to millions of working families and individuals, but what it takes away. It forces everyone, no matter how much they value their current health coverage, to give up that coverage and enter into a one-size-fits-all system and would significantly increase everyone’s taxes.

Healthcare is currently in a period of evolution, transitioning from a fee-for-service system to one that emphasizes value, improved outcomes, elevated population health, and greater cost-efficiency. To halt this progress in order to create a massive new government-run structure, with still-unknown financing provisions, would serve the interests of neither taxpayers nor patients. HLC believes that Congress should continue improving and building upon the current healthcare system instead of pursuing a single payer system that would set back patient-centered health innovation instead of advancing it. These improvements could include:

- Establishing a permanent health reinsurance program to help lower premiums for all consumers in the individual insurance market.
- Encouraging states to establish their own reinsurance programs, perhaps through state waivers in which the reinsurance program is partially funded by federal pass-through savings.
- Revising federal assistance to help more people afford coverage through premium tax credits in addition to cost-sharing protections to help lower-income consumers' access medical care.
- Increasing federal funding for outreach and awareness to encourage consumers to purchase and maintain health insurance coverage.
- Fixing the family glitch in which the cost to add family members to an individual's employer-sponsored health insurance is not considered when determining "affordability."
- Offering employers and consumers more choices for their coverage, increasing competition in the market place (e.g., value-based insurance designs).
- Modernizing health plans that are linked to health savings accounts.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding a potential implementation of a single payer healthcare system. 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,



Mary R. Grealy
President