



June 26, 2019

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Ways and Means Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Ways and Means Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady:

As the committee prepares to markup health legislation, the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) writes to express our support for the following legislation:

- H.R. 3414, The Opioid Workforce Act of 2019
- H.R. 3417, The Beneficiary Education Tools, Telehealth, and Extenders Reauthorization Act of 2019
- To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and Title XI of the Social Security Act to extend appropriations and transfers to the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund and to extend certain health insurance fees for such transfers, 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.

H.R. 3414, The Opioid Workforce Act of 2019

A well-trained fully resourced, and strategically deployed healthcare workforce is crucial for identifying, assessing, and treating individuals with chronic conditions or functional limitations. Care and health outcomes can be improved, and the costs of care reduced,

through an adequate physician workforce. To ensure that physicians have the training they need, Congress should pass H.R. 3414, the “Opioid Workforce Act of 2019.” Funding these new residency positions would significantly strengthen the health care workforce that serves on the front lines of the opioid epidemic and help mitigate the effects of the overall physician shortage. This legislation will enable the delivery of high-quality care and improve access to treatment for those suffering from substance use disorders.

H.R. 3417, The BETTER Act of 2019

HLC is a strong supporter of using telehealth and remote patient monitoring to connect with patients across various locations to coordinate care. Telehealth can offer an alternative to traditional healthcare and has proven to be effective in treating mental illness. To ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have better access to mental health services, Congress should pass H.R. 3417, the “The BETTER Act of 2019.” This legislation would expand access to mental health services by allowing eligible Medicare beneficiaries to receive mental health telehealth services in their home.

Additionally, this legislation would reauthorize funding for the National Quality Forum (NQF) through FY 2022 and includes provisions that allow NQF to make recommendations for removal of measures from federal programs and would allow for the prioritization of maternal mortality and morbidity measures for endorsement. For two decades the NQF has advanced quality measurement and improvement in healthcare. As we move toward a more transparent, value-based healthcare system, quality data can ensure that providers and patients can make a judgment based on accuracy and value.

PCORI Reauthorization

HLC supports the proposed legislation to continue funding for the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). HLC has long supported increased funding for PCORI. This institute has proven to be a leading organization in helping patients, clinicians, and policy makers make informed health decisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support of the proposed health legislation in advance of the full committee’s markup. HLC looks forward to continuing to collaborate with you on these important issues. 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