

May 11, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 2051

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We, the undersigned organizations, request that Congress make funds available for building the capacity of state and local governments and community-based organizations to fully implement the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services expansion in the American Jobs Plan.

Our work in communities across the country has uncovered a critical need to integrate systems that deliver healthcare, housing, and supportive services to our most vulnerable citizens. Integrating systems creates synergies that drive more holistic and person-centered approaches to service delivery. Unfortunately, state and local governments are generally not resourced to develop and deploy the cross-sector partnerships needed to integrate their health and social service systems. Community-based organizations often have the services network, but not the capacity to administer Medicaid activities and effectively support large populations. This leaves people who are cycling between crisis systems and congregate care settings to navigate the complex Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) system on their own. Even when navigator assistance is provided, people may get placed on multiple waitlists for long periods of time before getting access to services (if at all) or may be denied access to HCBS altogether due to outdated and over-restrictive eligibility guidelines. As a result, their medical and supportive service needs may become so severe that institutional care settings are their only option. Also, Medicaid HCBS only covers a subset of services that may be needed in order for someone with complex care issues to thrive in a community setting.

Congress can address the aforementioned issues with targeted legislative and funding actions. Specifically, we recommend:

- **Investing \$850 million in five-year capacity-building grants or contracts** (\$170 million/year) for government and community-based organizations to create system-level linkages needed to make HCBS more efficient and easier to navigate. Prioritize grants and contracts for culturally-specific CBOs that have a presence and trust connection to the communities being served.
- **Creating a \$2 billion fund for services that cannot be billed to Medicaid HCBS** to make it easier for providers to deliver a more comprehensive suite of patient-centered support services.
- **Requiring every Medicaid state plan to center racial equity** in program design and outcome/impact measures to increase the likelihood that quality services reach historically underserved and unserved populations.

- **Introducing and Passing the Home and Community-Based Services Access Act** (Dingell/Casey/Hassan) which would make HCBS a mandatory service under Medicaid.
- **Requiring universal screening for housing instability and providing housing support services, as needed**, for anyone who is applying for or receiving HCBS. This is a ‘no wrong door’ access to services that could prevent or mitigate homelessness for those who may not be eligible for HCBS care services.

We thank you for working with the Administration to invest in families and communities and look forward to the transformational changes that are coming.

Sincerely,

Organizations listed in alphabetical order (as of May 10, 2021)

AIDS Alabama
 AIDS Foundation Chicago
 All Home CA
 America Forward
 Arizona Housing Coalition
 Association for Individual Development (AID)
 Avalon Housing
 Build Healthy Places Network
 Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
 Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers
 CANI-PAC
 Cardea Health
 Child Welfare League of America
 Community Collaborative Group, LLC
 Community Oriented Correctional Health Services (COCHS)
 Community Solutions
 Complete 360 LRCO
 CSH
 DESC
 Downtown Women's Center
 Englewood CDC
 Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco
 Funders Together to End Homelessness
 Georgia Supportive Housing Association, Inc.
 Harrisonburg RHA
 Hathaway Sycamores
 Haven's House Youth Services
 Home Forward
 Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND)
 Imagine LA
 Lafayette Transitional Housing Center
 Lutheran Child and Family Services

Mental Health America of West Central Indiana
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Low Income Housing Coalition
Native American Connections
New Courtland
People Assisting The Homeless
Piedmont Housing Alliance
Portsmouth Area Resources Coalition, Inc.
Renew Indianapolis
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Shopworks Architecture
SMI Enterprises LLC
South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness (Los Angeles County)
South Bend Heritage Foundation, Inc.
St. Catherine's Center For Children
St. Joseph Center
Supportive Housing Providers Association
The Arc of the United States
The NOAH Project
The People Concern
The Planning Council
The Teen Project
Thrive Alliance
Truman Medical Center Behavioral Health
Union Station Homeless Services
United Way of Greater LA
United Way of the Wabash Valley
Virginia Housing Alliance
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley