



February 10, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

On behalf of the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), and National Association of Counties (NACo), we write to urge you to consider including the *Medicaid Reentry Act* in the next coronavirus relief package to allow Medicaid to cover health services in the last thirty days before an individual is released from prison or jail.

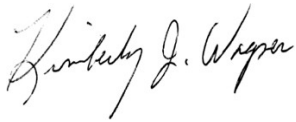
The Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP) prohibits the use of federal funds and services for medical care provided to inmates of public institutions. The MIEP negatively impacts rehabilitation outcomes and puts a financial strain on county budgets, especially during the COVID-19 emergency. With approximately 40 percent of jail inmates having a chronic medical condition and 63 percent having a substance use disorder,¹ the MIEP leads to an interruption in access to needed medical, mental health, and addiction treatment, which results in poorer health outcomes, ultimately driving up recidivism rates.

The *Medicaid Reentry Act* would strengthen local agencies' ability to connect people to critical healthcare as they leave incarceration, including advancing connections to coronavirus testing and treatment and other services needed to protect their health, and ultimately the health of the community.


¹ "Annual Survey of Jails: Jail-Level Data." 2017, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&iid=261>.

Including this language in the next COVID-19 response package would take an important step toward improving health outcomes for incarcerated individuals, reducing recidivism, and restoring the federal, state, and local partnership in delivering safety-net benefits.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to addressing the needs of local communities as we work to protect our residents during the coronavirus pandemic. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.



Kim Wagner
Executive Director
Major County Sheriffs of America



Jonathan Thompson
Executive Director & CEO
National Sheriffs' Association



Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director/CEO
National Association of Counties

cc:

Senator Tammy Baldwin
Senator Mike Braun
Senator Sherrod Brown
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Representative Brian Fitzpatrick
Representative Alcee Hastings
Representative David McKinley
Representative Paul Tonko
Representative David Trone
Representative Mike Turner
Representative Lauren Underwood