HEALTHCARE
LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL

January 8, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.   The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman   Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives   U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce   Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20515   Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

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

- H.R. 2477, The Beneficiary Enrollment Notification and Eligibility Simplification (BENES) Act of 2019; and
- H.R. 3935, The Protecting Patients Transportation to Care Act.

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.

<u>H.R. 2477, The BENES Act of 2019</u>
HLC strongly supports improving beneficiary outreach and education within the Medicare program. Many Medicare beneficiaries face lifetime penalties, coverage gaps, and other harmful consequences due to complicated enrollment rules and lack of notifications. With a rapid increase of baby boomers aging into the program, more education is needed. Furthermore, it is important that new beneficiaries understand the benefits of Medicare in particular and are not arbitrarily enrolled in fee-for-service Medicare. Individuals who miss their initial Medicare enrollment window may pay lifetime late enrollment penalties, experience lengthy gaps in outpatient health coverage

or face unaffordable and unexpected out-of-pocket healthcare costs. This legislation would improve outreach and education by requiring the federal government to send advance notice about the enrollment process to individuals approaching Medicare eligibility and would also reduce confusion by aligning the annual general enrollment period with the annual enrollment period for private Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans, helping enrollees avoid potentially hefty financial penalties.

H.R. 3935, The Protecting Patients Transportation to Care Act

The barriers and difficulties patients face in accessing healthcare often stem from social determinants, including income, education, and race or ethnicity. These social determinants can hinder patients from attaining the support and social services they need to become, and stay, healthy. Such services can include, but are not limited to, transportation to medical appointments, access to healthy foods, and assistance in securing safe housing.

Each year, Medicaid provides health insurance to approximately 70 million low-income and disabled individuals. Many of these individuals lack access to reliable transportation. Currently, federal regulations require state Medicaid programs to cover non-emergency medical transportation as a mandatory benefit but it is not mandated pursuant to statute. HLC supports this proposed legislation to make this regulation law by adding non-emergency medical transportation services for individuals without other means of transportation to the list of mandatory benefits that every state Medicaid program is required to provide.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding these legislative proposals to improve Americans' healthcare coverage and outcomes. 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