



Pacific Islands Primary Care Association

Website: pacificislandspca.org
E-mail: info@pacificislandspca.org

Honolulu Office
737 Bishop Street, Suite 2075
Honolulu HI 96813-3211
Phone: 808-537-5855
Fax: 808-537-6868

Regional Office
Marina Heights II, Suite 208
PO Box 5617 CHRB
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: 670-322-5617

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March 10, 2021

House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Health
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Insular Area Medicaid Parity Act (H.R. 265)

Dear Congressional Leaders,

As the organization representing the nine Pacific region's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and the 73,826 medically-underserved patients they serve, the Pacific Islands Primary Care Association (PIPICA) supports the Insular Area Medicaid Parity Act (H.R. 265). PIPICA is committed to supporting and promoting the improvement and expansion of quality primary care capacity of FQHCs in the US affiliated Pacific Islands, including Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa.

The Insular Area Medicaid Parity Act will resolve many of the Medicaid coverage disparities currently faced by those in the territories. I urge you to consider the following:

- Americans in the territories are no less American than those living in the US states. All U.S. citizens must be treated fairly and equitably regardless of the location of their American home.
- The territories will face the same Medicaid "cliff" for which a band-aid solution was made in 2019. A long-term solution is needed. Eliminate the cap, increase the FMAP.
- For the disaster-prone island territories, Medicaid financing must be responsive, becoming easier for Americans to access when they are most vulnerable without needing to wait for additional appropriations from Congress.
- Medicaid is built as a counter-cyclical program: its federal support expands to meet rising needs during an economic downturn. However, for the territories, Medicaid program funding is stagnant regardless of economic conditions.
- The 1108 cap on federal contribution and low federal matching rate for territory Medicaid programs are arbitrary – the funding disparity is not supported by fair or substantial cause.
- Equal treatment for territory Medicaid programs would enable the insular areas to keep their health care system on its current positive trajectory.
- Medicaid reimbursement is a critical source of revenue for health care service providers. Adequate Medicaid financing has a direct impact on the availability of health care services for all residents in the territories.

I write today in support of HR 265 and to ask for your support to ensure that the Americans living in the territories are afforded fair and equitable treatment under the Medicaid program. Many covered entities are struggling with severe financial losses as a

result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They cannot afford to be unfairly treated when providing the healthcare their patients need.

Thank you very much for your prompt consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Arielle Buyum". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Arielle Buyum
Executive Director