

August 31, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Dick Durban
Majority Whip
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray
Assistant Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Majority Whip Durban, and Chairman Wyden:

The organizations signing this letter represent the nation's leading Medicaid health plans, which are committed to ensuring comprehensive and stable health care coverage and access to care for the tens of millions of individuals who are eligible for Medicaid and CHIP and those dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, where coordination between these two programs is so important. We urge Congress to include a state option for 12 months' continuous eligibility for all people covered in Medicaid and CHIP in the reconciliation package currently under development.

Your leadership on Medicaid and CHIP continuous eligibility will ensure that Americans who rely on these critical state/federal programs have stable health care coverage. Consistent Medicaid and CHIP coverage will

- Ensure stable access to health care and the potential for better health for the tens of millions of individuals on these programs, including people with heart failure, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and substance use and mental health disorders.
- Provide financial security regarding health care needs for families on Medicaid and CHIP.
- Improve program efficiency for states and health care providers, for whom coverage interruptions result in higher administrative costs.
- Prevent disruptions in care coordination, case management, and social determinants of health activities employed by Medicaid health plans.

Our health plan members manage care for millions of people in Medicaid and CHIP who enroll only to subsequently lose their coverage – despite often still being eligible – because of inefficient paperwork and other reporting requirements. [Some hourly wage-earning individuals](#) briefly lose coverage due to small, temporary income fluctuations that are quickly reversed, necessitating new eligibility determinations. [A 2015 analysis](#) found adults to be enrolled in Medicaid on average for only [9½ months of the year](#); children are enrolled for just [10 months](#).

We applaud Congress for enacting the *American Rescue Plan Act*, which included a five-year state option to provide Medicaid and CHIP continuous eligibility to pregnant and postpartum individuals. And as the nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are grateful for the continuous eligibility maintenance of effort protection that Congress built into the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act's* FMAP increase, which has temporarily halted the typical cycle of eligibility “churn” for people with Medicaid coverage. But we harbor grave concerns about the potential for coverage and care disruptions when the official public health emergency concludes.

We recognize also that supporting the inclusion of continuous eligibility in Medicaid in the reconciliation package aligns with the [Biden's Administration recent action](#) to extend the timeframe for states to complete pending eligibility and enrollment actions to up to 12 months after the month in which the COVID-19 public health emergency ends.

Allowing states to provide 12 months of continuous Medicaid enrollment for all populations will keep Medicaid and CHIP enrollees healthy. We look forward to working with you to make this legislation a reality. Thank you for your leadership on Medicaid.

Sincerely,

The Alliance of Community Health Plans
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Coalition of New York State Public Health Plans
Local Health Plans of California
MLTSS Association
Medicaid Health Plans of America
Michigan Association of Health Plans
Minnesota Association of County Health Plans
Pennsylvania's Medicaid Managed Care Organizations
SNP Alliance
Texas Association of Community Health Plans