

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States Congress  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Majority Leader  
United States Congress  
H-204 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-220 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

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

The 58 undersigned advocacy organizations respectfully request that you include legislation to protect Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) in the next relief package addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

NEMT has been a mandatory benefit in the Medicaid program since its earliest days but has never been explicitly required in statute. While medical appointments vary by state, beneficiaries use NEMT to access critical services including COVID-19 testing, kidney dialysis, substance use disorder (SUD) treatments, behavioral health appointments, and primary care preventive health visits. The NEMT benefit is used by only 7 percent of the Medicaid population and accounts for less than 1 percent of total Medicaid spending. Yet for those who rely most upon NEMT—the chronically ill, particularly those with ESRD—it can be a lifeline allowing beneficiaries to stay in their homes and out of the hospital.

Despite this dire need for NEMT services at this time as well as the need for the additional services that NEMT networks provide in this crisis, CMS is planning to make the benefit optional at the state level and was scheduled to release an RFI to that effect in December. Further, the administration's new Healthy Adult Opportunity Section 1115 waiver process encourages states to curtail the benefit.

Bipartisan legislation codifying the benefit and ensuring appropriate use is currently pending in both the House (H.R. 3935) and Senate (S. 2846), with the House bill unanimously reported from the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee last month. As our healthcare system strains to meet the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic, now is the time for Congress to act to ensure the NEMT benefit is available for Medicaid's most vulnerable beneficiaries.

The modest cost of transporting a beneficiary to a dialysis session or to a doctor's appointment to help manage multiple chronic conditions has been proven across multiple studies to be far less than the costs incurred if such appointments are missed and beneficiaries requires more drastic and expensive interventions. In this time of crisis, it is more important than ever that we prevent such episodes and conserve healthcare resources for COVID-19 patients.

We urge you to take this opportunity—right now—to permanently protect NEMT in Medicaid, and we thank you in advance for giving this request your fullest consideration.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Alabama  
AIDS Alabama South  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
Allies for Independence  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Federation of County and Municipal Employees  
American Kidney Fund  
American Network of Community Options and Resources  
American Public Transportation Association  
American Therapeutic Recreation Association  
Amida Care  
The Arc of the United States  
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Center for Autism and Related Disorders  
Center for Public Representation  
Children's Health Fund  
Community Catalyst  
Community Transportation Association of America  
Dialysis Patient Citizens  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund  
Easterseals  
Equality NC  
FamiliesUSA  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Greater WI Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR)  
Justice in Aging  
HIV Dental Alliance  
HIV Medicine Association

Hudson Valley Community Services  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
Lutheran Services in America  
Medicare Rights Center  
Mental Health America  
Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research  
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A)  
National Association of Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services  
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)  
National Council on Aging  
National Healthcare for the Homeless Council  
Nevada Disability Coalition  
Pennsylvania Council on Independent Living  
Schizophrenia And Related Disorders Alliance of America  
SKIL Resource Center  
The Transportation Alliance  
Treatment Action Group  
Treatment Communities of America  
United Spinal Association  
WI Association of Mobility Managers (WAMM)  
Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN)

CC: The Honorable Charles Grassley  
The Honorable Ron Wyden  
The Honorable Frank Pallone  
The Honorable Greg Walden  
The Honorable Anna Eshoo  
The Honorable Michael Burgess  
The Honorable Buddy Carter  
The Honorable Tony Cardenas  
The Honorable Sherrod Brown