April \_\_, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi The Honorable Kevin McCarthy

Speaker of the House Majority Leader

United States Congress United States Congress

H-232 The Capitol H-204 The Capitol

Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell The Honorable Chuck Schumer

Majority Leader Minority Leader

United States Senate United States Senate

S-230 The Capitol S-220 The Capitol

Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC 20510

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

As Congress continues its response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are writing as the members of the Medical Transportation Access Coalition (MTAC) ([www.MTACCoalition.org](http://www.MTACCoalition.org)) to request that you include legislation to protect non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) in the Medicaid program if future relief packages are considered.

NEMT is a critically important benefit that has been part of every state Medicaid program since the earliest days of Medicaid yet it has never been explicitly required in statute. All states are required to provide Medicaid beneficiaries who lack access to transportation with NEMT services so they can travel to necessary medical appointments. While medical appointments vary by state, common needs beneficiaries use NEMT to access treatment including kidney dialysis, substance use disorder (SUD) treatments, mental and behavioral health appointments and primary care visits. The NEMT benefit is used by a very small percentage (roughly 7 percent) of the Medicaid population and accounts for less than 1 percent of total Medicaid spending. Yet for those who rely upon NEMT – typically the very sick and the very poor – it is a lifeline.

Bipartisan legislation that would authorize the NEMT benefit in the Social Security Act – including requirements for states to maintain programs to ensure appropriate use of the benefit – is pending in both the House and Senate, with a House bill recently clearing a key subcommittee. With our nation’s healthcare system straining to address the needs of COVID-19 atop of other demands, now is the time for Congress to finally act to ensure the NEMT benefit is available for Medicaid’s most vulnerable beneficiaries. As we write, NEMT providers are a part of the healthcare workforce that is on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. Those beneficiaries who rely on NEMT don’t have the luxury of deferring an appointment, like a dialysis session, or finding other transit options. NEMT providers and their partners are acting aggressively to ensure this vital service remains available while taking measures to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19. These measures include reducing the number of beneficiaries in multi-load transports, ensuring appropriate cleaning of vehicles as supplies exist, adjusting routes to account for healthcare facilities that may be accepting only those patients with the virus, and supporting the overall response.

Many NEMT providers and partners are also stepping up during this national crisis to meet the demand for both medical and non-medical goods and services, such as durable medical equipment and food. These activities underscore how NEMT sustains critical infrastructure needed to rebound the economy.

Finally, a number of studies over the years have explored and validated the tremendous return on investment associated with NEMT in Medicaid and more broadly. The modest cost of transporting a beneficiary to a dialysis session or to a doctor’s appointment to help manage multiple chronic conditions will be far less than the costs that will be incurred if such appointments are missed and the beneficiary requires more intensive and expensive interventions.

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,

Medical Transportation Access Coalition

American Psychiatric Association

Anthem

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

Association for Community Affiliated Plans

BlueCross BlueShield Association

Community Transportation Association of America

Coordinated Transportation Solutions

Dialysis Patient Citizens

Easterseals

IntelliRide

LogistiCare | Circulation

Lyft

Medicaid Health Plans of America

Medical Transportation Management

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

National Council for Behavioral Health

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

National Rural Health Association

Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America

Southeastrans

Tennessee Carriers

Uber Health

UnitedHealthcare Community & State

United Spinal Association

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