

May 14, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of Families USA, a leading national voice for health care consumers, I write to offer our support for H.R. 987, the *Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act*, legislation being considered by the House of Representatives this week that will improve health coverage and lower drug costs. In last fall's election, families across the nation made it clear that they want Congress to focus on protecting access to high quality health care coverage and lowering health care costs. This bill represents the first major legislation to be considered before the House toward that effort.

H.R. 987 is a made up of several proposals that would improve health coverage for families, protect people with pre-existing conditions by reversing Trump Administration actions that fundamentally undermine the individual and small group markets, and lower prescription drug costs by bringing generic drugs to market faster. Specifically, we write to express our support of provisions that:

- Rescind the Trump Administration rule that has allowed junk short-term plans to flourish;
- Provide \$100 million annually for the federal marketplace Navigator program and reinstate standards to ensure the quality of the program. These efforts restore cutbacks to the program made by the Trump administration;
- Restore outreach and marketing funding to ensure consumers are informed about their options for affordable health care, which has been slashed by the Trump Administration;
- Provide states funding to establish their own marketplaces;
- Establish a process by which generic manufacturers could obtain sufficient quantities of brand drug samples for testing, thereby deterring gaming of safety protocols that brand manufacturers use to delay or impede generic entry; and
- Make it illegal for brand-name and generic drug manufacturers to enter into agreements in which the brand-name drug manufacturer pays the generic manufacturer to keep a generic equivalent off the market (so-called "pay for delay" agreements).

H.R. 987's consideration follows passage of legislation to undo the Trump Administration's harmful guidance on 1332 waivers, which would allow states to circumvent important consumer protections.

The *Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act* represents a meaningful, positive step toward stronger coverage and lower health care costs, but much more needs to be done in both the coverage and prescription drug areas. We urge House to move swiftly to pass legislation that reduces insurance premiums in the individual and small group markets, both for low-income families and those that are not eligible for tax credits. Further, the House should consider and pass legislation

allowing Medicare to negotiate with drug manufacturers to bring down the cost of prescription drugs. Last fall, candidates made a commitment to voters on health care. Now it is time for lawmakers to honor that commitment.

We look forward to working with you on further efforts to lower consumer health care costs and expand health care access, value, and equity.

Sincerely,



Frederick Isasi
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Greg Walden, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Richard Neal, Chair, Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Chair, Committee on Education and Labor
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, Committee on Education and Labor