



March 19, 2020

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

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of *No Surprises: People Against Unfair Medical Bills*, representing patients, consumers, and workers, we are thankful for your leadership while grappling with the current public health emergency and **urge you to include surprise billing legislation as part of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) response to protect families across the country.**

Now more than ever, families are vulnerable to unexpected health care costs and should not have to worry about receiving a surprise bill for putting the health of themselves or their family members first. Prior to the current health emergency, more than 10,000 families received a surprise bill each day. And, the press already report families receiving very large medical bills in relations to COVID testing and care, including parents receiving thousands of dollars in bills for COVID-related screening and care for themselves and their children.¹

Including an end to surprise bills is an imperative at this time, and we would support any legislative fix that meets our three principles: (1) fully protecting consumers from surprise bills (2) ensuring any solution does not increase health care costs for consumers, and (3) protecting consumers across all health plans and provider settings.

Three House committees and the Senate committee of jurisdiction have all passed legislation that meet these principles and provide a strong framework for any legislation to be included in a response package. These legislative approaches all enjoy broad bipartisan support and the President has signaled his support to enact such legislation. **The time to act is now.**

The recent outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States has exposed many deficiencies within our public health and health care systems. Congress has an opportunity to come together to slow this pandemic and to work to improve our system for all families. As you consider solutions that will lower barriers to access to health care and those to mitigate the economic impact of the looming recession due to the

¹ See e.g., Kliff, S. "Kept at the Hospital on Coronavirus Fears, Now Facing Large Medical Bills". *New York Times*. February 29, 2020. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/29/upshot/coronavirus-surprise-medical-bills.html?auth=login-email&login=email&referringSource=articleShare> . Accessed April 18, 2020.

massive disruption caused by the pandemic, **we urge Congress to include an end to surprise bills to ensure that families are not faced with further financial burdens and can prioritize seeking necessary care at this critical time.**

Sincerely,

Families USA Action

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Kidney Fund

Americans for Financial Reform

Arthritis Foundation

Community Catalyst

Consumer Reports

Doctors for America

Health Access California

Health Care for America Now (HCAN)

Indivisible

MomsRising

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

National Consumers League

National Partnership for Women & Families

Public Citizen

Voices for Progress

Young Invincibles