



July 28, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Chronic Illness and Disability Partnership (CIDP), we are writing to strongly urge Congress to ensure inclusion of a fix for the Medicaid coverage gap in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. CIDP consists of national organizations representing individuals who are low income and those who are aging and/or living with a wide range of chronic illnesses and disabilities, including cancer, diabetes, HIV, hepatitis B and C, developmental disabilities, aging, mental health and substance use disorders. While our organizations are national in scope, we also affiliate with strong regional, state, and community-based advocacy networks.

We applaud Congress for moving forward on an ambitious reconciliation package with important healthcare protections for people living with chronic conditions and disabilities. However, we urge Congress to also include a fix to the Medicaid coverage gap. The Medicaid coverage gap persists in the 12 states that have not adopted the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Without federal action to expand access to coverage for the individuals in those states, Congress risks leaving the most vulnerable communities behind. According to national estimates, over two million low-income individuals living in these states are both denied access to Medicaid and ineligible for subsidies to purchase private insurance on the ACA Marketplace.¹ This leaves them without access to the care and treatment that would

¹ Rachel Garfield, Kendal Orgera, and Anthony Damico, Kaiser Family Foundation, *The Coverage Gap: Uninsured Poor Adults in States that Do Not Expand Medicaid* (January 2021), available at

help them remain healthy and stave off disease progression and disability. Studies have indicated that closing the Medicaid coverage gap will have a dramatic impact on diabetes care,² HIV care,³ and cancer care,⁴ among other conditions. Failure to expand Medicaid in all states has also exacerbated already challenging health care access in those states, particularly for rural areas where hospital closures are common. People with chronic conditions and disabilities need access to both insurance and a stable healthcare system that is able to provide care and treatment where they live.

In addition, people of color make up 60 percent of those in the coverage gap, significantly higher than the 41 percent share of the adult, non-elderly population in non-expansion states.⁵ Closing the Medicaid coverage gap is not only a health policy priority, it is a health equity imperative.

It is not too late to ensure inclusion of a Medicaid coverage gap fix in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. We urge Congress to do the right thing for the constituents who live in non-Medicaid expansion states, particularly those living with chronic conditions and disabilities who will be disproportionately harmed if Congress does not act.

If we can be of any assistance, please reach out to Jean McGuire (j.mcguire@northeastern.edu), Amy Killelea (amyk@killeleaconsulting.com), and Robert Greenwald (rgreenwa@law.harvard.edu).

Respectfully submitted by the Chronic Illness and Disability Partnership.

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-coverage-gap-uninsured-poor-adults-in-states-that-do-not-expand-medicaid/>.

² Rebecca Myerson, Tianyi Lu, Ivy Tonnu-Mihara, and Elbert S. Huang, Medicaid Eligibility Expansions May Address Gaps in Access To Diabetes Medications, Health Affairs, VO. 37, No. 8 (August 2018), available at <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2018.0154>.

³ Lindsey Dawson, Jennifer Kates, Kaiser Family Foundation, Insurance Coverage and Viral Suppression Among People with HIV, available at <https://www.kff.org/hiv/aids/issue-brief/insurance-coverage-and-viral-suppression-among-people-with-hiv-2018/>.

⁴ Blythe J.S. Adamson, PhD, Aaron B. Cohen, MD, Cary P. Gross, MD, et al., ACA Medicaid Expansion Association with Racial Disparity Reductions in Timely Cancer Treatment, The American Journal of Managed Care, July 2021, Volume 27, Issue 7.

⁵ Laura Harker, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Closing the Coverage Gap a Critical Step for Advancing Health and Economic Justice (October 2021), available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/closing-the-coverage-gap-a-critical-step-for-advancing-health-and-economic-justice>.