

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2020

Seema Verma, MPH
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Verma:

We write to express our deep concern with the Administration's "Healthy Adult Opportunity" guidance, which would fundamentally undermine the Medicaid system and jeopardize the health of our communities. In our home state of Pennsylvania, Medicaid expansion has given more than 800,000 adults access to affordable healthcare that they did not have before.^[1] Despite the Administration's claims that this proposal would give greater flexibility to states, the truth is this is a continuation of a pattern of attacks on what is working well in our healthcare system.

The numbers tell a profound story: in Pennsylvania, twenty percent of the total population is covered by Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). This coverage is particularly important for our children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. In Pennsylvania, Medicaid covers:

- One in three children
- Two in three residents of nursing homes
- Two in five people with disabilities

Rather than increase states' flexibility, as the proposal purports to do, block granting Medicaid could lead states receiving lump sum annual payments to have to make tough choices that would put beneficiaries at risk. We believe that states already have adequate flexibility to make Medicaid expansion attractive. We are particularly concerned that your proposal would allow states to limit access to prescription drugs, and to impose eligibility criteria that could severely limit access. If the goal is to create a pathway for states that have not yet expanded Medicaid to do so, we encourage you to engage with Congress about other ways to incentivize expansion, such as a proposal to allow states to receive the same full federal matching funds as early adopters did.

^[1] Kaiser Family Foundation, October 2019

While your rhetoric suggests otherwise, it is clear that this proposal is not truly intended to increase benefits or encourage states to expand their Medicaid programs, but rather a cynical ploy to cut benefits and raise costs for the millions of individuals who benefited from Medicaid expansion over the last several years. We applaud Pennsylvania Governor Wolf for putting people first and rejecting the block grant proposal, making clear that our state will not participate under his Administration. Congress has repeatedly rejected proposals to cut Medicaid on a bipartisan basis because we know that this program is a lifesaver for many, especially the most vulnerable among us. States already have sufficient flexibility under the law to adapt their Medicaid program to local needs.

The "Healthy Adult Opportunity" proposal is yet another attempt to undermine what is working with our healthcare system and to cut access to affordable healthcare for seniors, children, people with disabilities, and low-income adults. We oppose this proposal and urge the Administration to reconsider, and instead work with the Congress to expand – not restrict – access to affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans.

Sincerely,



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Brendan Boyle
Member of Congress



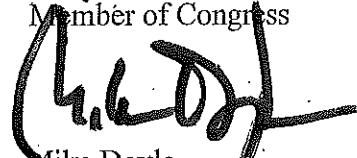
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



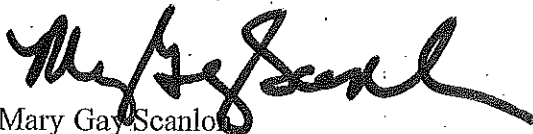
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



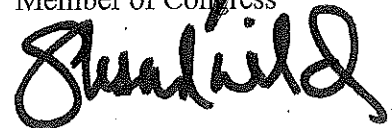
Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Conor Lamb
Member of Congress