



July 14, 2022

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing the Patient Access to Responsible Care Alliance (PARCA), we are writing to you today to thank you for your leadership throughout the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency (PHE) to improve the nation's healthcare system and increase patient access to care. Throughout the pandemic, the committee has led efforts to help healthcare providers like those we represent, as well as hospital and patients, as we deal with the extraordinary challenges presented by COVID-19. As we continue the process of emerging from the pandemic, we hope that your committee will take a thoughtful look at the lessons learned during the PHE. Many of the temporary waivers put in place during the PHE, such as the removal of telehealth barriers and unnecessary barriers to practice, have expanded patient access to the high-quality life-saving healthcare. As the committee examines and legislates on the successes and challenges of the PHE and other issues crucial to health care delivery, we would like to offer our members as helpful witnesses for future committee hearings.

As member organizations of PARCA, we represent non-MD/DO Medicare recognized health and mental health providers who provide high-quality, evidence-based care to millions of Americans, especially to those living in rural and underserved areas. As the provider of choice for many patients, we understand the importance of ensuring providers are recognized to practice to the full extent of their training, education, certification, and experience to increase patient access to care and competition, lower costs and maintain quality and safety. Collectively, PARCA member organizations represent over 4 million providers throughout the nation, with expertise in a wide variety of areas.

As organizations representing non-MD/DO Medicare recognized healthcare providers, our members have seen the positive effects of the PHE waivers that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have put in place to ensure that all providers can practice to the full extent of their education and to increase access to quality healthcare for all Americans, particularly those in rural areas and underserved populations. Our members have experience serving on the frontlines of healthcare delivery during the PHE and can testify about their firsthand experiences dealing with COVID-19 and how their practice has been affected by waivers and changes in healthcare policy.



As the health care delivery system evolves, our members are becoming predominant providers for Medicare patients and are often the first line of care for many patients, yet Medicare statutes and regulations continue to lag behind in reflecting these changes. As more patients are receiving high-quality care from non-MD/DO providers, it is crucial that the committee hear from these providers. The experience that our members have is critical to understanding the important lessons of the PHE and how we can better expand healthcare access moving forward. We strongly urge your committee to consider the many non-MD/DO healthcare providers who can act as witnesses at hearings, to tell an equally important and underrepresented story of their critical role in healthcare delivery.

Each of our organizations are willing to help provide expert witnesses with broad ranges of experience, including experience treating patients with COVID-19; increasing patient access to care in rural and underserved areas, as well as for minority patients; managing health systems and provider owned practices; experience with practicing under the CMS waivers during the PHE; the impact Medicare payment policies have had on the ability of beneficiaries to access care; the flexibility telehealth waivers have provided to many patients, as well as a multitude of other experiences. These insights can help inform your committee as you continue to review changes from the PHE and deliberate in these areas moving forward.

The members of PARCA hope to be constructive partners in this effort and hope that you will consider non-MD/DO providers as witnesses for future hearing. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss how we can be helpful in providing witnesses, you can reach out to Matthew Thackston, Chair of the PARCA Coalition at mthackston@aana.com or at (202) 741-9081 or to any of our organizations individually. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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