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January 3, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
204 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing regarding our ongoing commitment to reform of the health care system and potential legislative actions during the first months of the 115th Congress.

The AMA has long advocated for health insurance coverage for all Americans, as well as pluralism, freedom of choice, freedom of practice, and universal access for patients. These policy positions are guided by the actions of the AMA House of Delegates, composed of representatives of more than 190 state and national specialty medical associations, and they form the basis for AMA consideration of reforms to our health care system. (A summary of key AMA objectives for health system reform is attached.)

Health system reform is an ongoing quest for improvement. The AMA supported passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) because it was a significant improvement on the status quo at that time. We continue to embrace the primary goal of that law—to make high quality, affordable health care coverage accessible to all Americans. We also recognize that the ACA is imperfect and there a number of issues that need to be addressed. As such, we welcome proposals, consistent with the policies of our House of Delegates, to make coverage more affordable, provide greater choice, and increase the number of those insured.

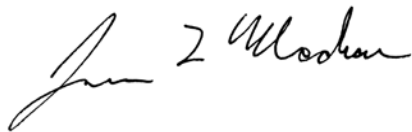
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In considering opportunities to make coverage more affordable and accessible to all Americans, it is essential that gains in the number of Americans with health insurance coverage be maintained.

Consistent with this core principle, we believe that before any action is taken through reconciliation or other means that would potentially alter coverage, policymakers should lay out for the American people, in reasonable detail, what will replace current policies. Patients and other stakeholders should be able to clearly compare current policy to new proposals so they can make informed decisions about whether it represents a step forward in the ongoing process of health reform.

We stand ready to work with you to continue the process of improving our health care system and ensuring that all Americans have access to high quality, affordable health care coverage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim L Madara".

James L. Madara, MD

Attachment



American Medical Association Health System Reform Objectives

The AMA has long advocated for health insurance coverage for all Americans, as well as pluralism, freedom of choice, freedom of practice, and universal access for patients. The same core principles and priorities will guide future AMA advocacy efforts regarding amendments to the Affordable Care Act and any health system reform proposals. The AMA remains committed to improving health insurance coverage and health care access so that patients receive timely, high-quality care, preventive services, medications and other necessary treatments.

The following are key objectives that reflect current AMA policy on health reform that will guide us in discussions regarding ongoing efforts to improve the system.

- Assure that individuals currently covered do not become uninsured and take steps toward achieving coverage and access for all Americans.
- Maintain key insurance market reforms, such as coverage for pre-existing conditions, guaranteed issue and parental coverage for young adults.
- Stabilize and strengthen the individual insurance market.
- Ensure that low and moderate income patients are able to secure affordable and adequate coverage.
- Ensure that Medicaid, CHIP, and other safety net programs are adequately funded.
- Reduce regulatory burdens that detract from patient care and increase costs.
- Provide greater cost transparency throughout the health care system.
- Incorporate common sense medical liability reforms.
- Continue the advancement of delivery reforms and new physician-led payment models to achieve good outcomes, high quality, and lower spending trends.