

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Cheri Bustos
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim McGovern
U.S. House of Representatives
408 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
U.S. House of Representatives
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
U.S. House of Representatives
1035 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bustos, Cole, McGovern, and McMorris Rodgers:

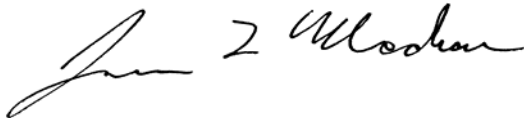
On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to support H.R. 4004, the Social Determinants Accelerator Act, which is aimed at providing local communities with the funding and planning tools to implement solutions to social determinants of health (SDOH). The AMA recognizes racial and ethnic health inequities as a major public health problem in the U.S. and as a barrier to effective medical diagnosis and treatment. The elimination of racial and ethnic inequities in health care is an issue of highest priority for the AMA, and we advocate that health equity—defined as optimal health for all—be a goal for the U.S. health system. In order to address SDOH and health inequities, the AMA created a new Center for Health Equity last year whose mission is to strengthen, amplify, and sustain the AMA’s work to eliminate health inequities—improving health outcomes and closing disparity gaps—which are rooted in historical and contemporary injustices and discrimination.

The Social Determinants Accelerator Act is squarely focused on helping to address issues pertaining to SDOH and health inequities. H.R. 4004 would provide \$25 million in planning grants to states and local entities to design Medicaid interventions on SDOH, which would be used to help develop “social determinants accelerator plans” for use by state, local, and tribal governments. Such plans would be targeted at a group of high-need Medicaid patients, such as homeless individuals, older workers with arthritis, nursing home patients, or mothers diagnosed with post-partum depression, as well as identify key outcomes to be achieved through improved coordination of health and non-health services and use of evidence-based interventions. The social determinants accelerator plans also would include a plan for linking data across programs measuring the impact of the new approach on the health of participants and the return-on-investment for taxpayers. An underlying goal of the accelerator plans is to develop ways to more effectively identify and utilize existing programs and authorities to address SDOH. To assist with this crucial task, the bill requires that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services establish and convene the Social Determinants Accelerator Council, an inter-agency technical advisory council on SDOH. The technical assistance provided by the task force include helping state, local, and tribal governments better leverage unknown or underutilized programs, along with developing rigorous program evaluation guidelines.

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The AMA believes the provisions in this legislation would be an important step forward in helping to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities. Thank you for your leadership in introducing the Social Determinants Accelerator Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD