

June 4, 2021

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  
370 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 Markwayne Mullin  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2421 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bustos, Cole, McGovern, and Mullin:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to write in support of H.R. 2503, the Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2021, which is aimed at providing local communities with the funding and planning tools to implement solutions to addressing social determinants of health (SDOH). The disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized and marginalized communities continues to highlight the serious disparities in our health system and the urgent need to address the nonmedical, yet critical, underlying determinants of health that adversely affect patient outcomes: economic stability, neighborhoods, transportation, education and life opportunities, ample access to healthy food, affordable and safe housing, community/social support, and high quality health care. Racial and ethnic health inequities are a major public health problem in the U.S. and a barrier to effective medical diagnosis and treatment. Addressing the determinants of health and root causes of health disparities and racial inequities is key to improving patient outcomes, a top priority for the AMA.

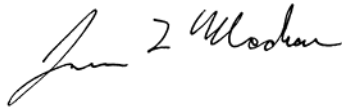
The Social Determinants Accelerator Act is squarely focused on helping to address issues pertaining to SDOH and health inequities. H.R. 2503 would provide \$25 million in planning grants to state, local, and tribal governments to design “social determinants accelerator plans” to improve the health and well-being of individuals, especially those participating in the Medicaid program. The legislation also stipulates that 20 percent of the funding be reserved for policy plans that assist rural populations. These plans could 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 provisions 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 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish and convene the Social Determinants Accelerator Council, an inter-agency technical advisory council on SDOH. The technical assistance provided by the task force includes helping state, local, and tribal

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governments better leverage unknown or underutilized programs, along with developing rigorous program evaluation guidelines.

The AMA was pleased to see that the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 created a pilot program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention based on this bill, and we support the president's FY 2022 discretionary budget request of \$153 million to build on this policy and continue to provide funding to state, local, and tribal governments to counteract the detrimental impact of SDOH on patients. We believe the provisions in this legislation would complement and expand the pilot program and are 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 style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD