

NATIONAL
HEALTH CARE
for the
HOMELESS
COUNCIL

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

June 9, 2017

Dear Senator Alexander:

On behalf of the National Health Care for the Homeless community, which represents 300 federally qualified health centers and others serving nearly 1 million patients experiencing homelessness each year, I write to ask you to protect access to health care, and most specifically to protect the Medicaid program.

Under the Affordable Care Act, this country made enormous gains to reduce the uninsured. As providers serving people who are homeless—a group largely ineligible for insurance previously—we saw a significant increase in insured individuals and the quality of the services we provide has improved, among many other positive changes. States that expanded Medicaid have been better able to end homelessness because of the comprehensive care that insurance facilitates. Unfortunately, not all states expanded this life-saving program, and it is to the detriment of state budgets, public health goals, health care providers, and—most importantly—citizens of this country who otherwise go without care. The lack of basic health care for all people perpetuates homelessness and is devastating to families, communities, and a drain on this country's economy. Current proposals that rearrange the financial structure of Medicaid into a block grant or spending cap reduce this country's capacity to care for homeless and medically vulnerable individuals.

Senator, I ask that you protect the financial structuring of Medicaid because it is the right thing to do. The Health Care for the Homeless community is counting on you to make policy decisions that are rooted in the value we place on human life rather than only short-term federal cost goals. Every dollar taken away from health care is a dollar taken away from the care of our neighbors and families.

Health reform is an opportunity to adjust the moral tenor of this country, and recognize that health care is a human right. In order to allow for a country where all may thrive and prosper we need a universal system of health care. If you would like to discuss how health and homelessness are interrelated, and why Medicaid is vital for those we serve, please contact Regina Reed, MPH, National Health Policy Organizer, at rreed@hchmd.org or at 443-703-1337.

Sincerely,



G. Robert Watts
Chief Executive Officer