January 23, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

The expansion of Medicaid to single adults, made possible through the Affordable Care Act, is a vital benefit for people experiencing homelessness. As safety net health care providers who deliver direct care to approximately 1 million unhoused people across the United States—and other organizations and individuals concerned about the health of unhoused people— **we are very concerned about the budget cuts and policy changes being proposed to this essential health insurance program.**

Almost 40 years ago, the Institute of Medicine found that poor health was a primary cause of homelessness, that the traumatic experience of homelessness created new health care conditions and exacerbated existing ones, and that homelessness prevented vulnerable people from accessing needed care. Many studies have confirmed those findings. People experiencing homelessness have higher rates of chronic, acute, and behavioral health conditions, which are compounded by stress, weather conditions, and social isolation. Poor health is the primary reason this group also has high rates of emergency department visits and readmissions to the hospital. Hence, Medicaid—as a core health insurance program—is a critical component to addressing the health care needs of those who are homeless.

Together with 118 organizations and over 600 individuals, we write to urge you to protect the Medicaid expansion provision and oppose changes that compromise eligibility or undermine financing for the Medicaid program (such as work requirements, lower federal reimbursements, or other barriers to enrollment and eligibility). Not only do very vulnerable people depend on Medicaid, but so does the larger health care system, which has used Medicaid to implement successful hospital diversion programs as well as cost-effective solutions to homelessness.

- **People experiencing homelessness depend on Medicaid—especially the expansion benefit.**

In 2013, prior to the ACA's expansion provision, 57% of the patients served by HRSA-funded Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) programs nationally were uninsured and 34% were enrolled in Medicaid. Ten years later in 2023, HCH programs in states that expanded Medicaid saw their uninsured rate drop to 21% and enrollment in Medicaid increase to 62%. For people experiencing homelessness, the expansion of Medicaid provides access to comprehensive, system-wide care that better enables them to work, go to school, and seek housing and other basic needs. This includes coverage for prescription drugs, hospital and specialty services as well as the broad range of care that people need to manage chronic and acute illnesses and access preventive care. As the number one payor of behavioral health care, Medicaid is also an especially important

component to addressing substance use disorders (to include opioid use disorder) and mental health conditions.

- **Safety net health care providers depend on an expanded Medicaid program.**

Medicaid expansion increased financial resources for health care providers who serve those experiencing homelessness. Instead of being limited to a patchwork of short-term and uncoordinated grants, many more services are now reimbursed by third-party insurers, thereby increasing providers' financial stability and making them more likely to have adopted a patient-centered medical home where care coordination and addiction treatment are available. This directly led to reduced uncompensated care for hospitals and other providers. The additional revenue improved capacity at health centers to hire more staff and improve a number of chronic and preventive outcome measures (for example, asthma treatment, cancer screenings, hypertension control, and so forth). Expansion specifically improved access to behavioral health and preventive care in rural areas, where homelessness is increasingly an issue. Hospitals, health centers, and specialty care providers depend on the reimbursements Medicaid provides, while the larger health care system benefits from the improved system integration that enrollment in insurance facilitates. **When both patients and providers have the resources they need, everyone benefits.**

- **Medicaid drives innovative, cost-effective health system improvements and solutions to homelessness.**

Medicaid expansion has allowed many states to tailor their health care systems to cover services designed to reduce overall costs and improve health outcomes among unhoused people. Specifically, states have added tenancy supports in supportive housing that show cost savings and system improvements from integrating services with housing. Likewise, states have also developed medical respite care programs, which help hospitals divert emergency room and hospital re-admissions and improve health outcomes for unhoused people. For state budgets, Medicaid is the largest source of federal funds. If federal funding is reduced, the cost burden would be shifted to states who then will be forced to shift the financial burden to hospitals and taxpayers, . When Medicaid-funded services are combined with other funding sources for housing (such as HUD-funded rental assistance programs), low-income people can build a healthier, more secure future and health care systems can operate more efficiently.

Conclusion

Like everyone, unhoused people deserve comprehensive, high-quality health care—and access to health insurance to pay for it. The Medicaid program—and specifically the expansion of Medicaid to single adults—is a vital lifeline for people experiencing homelessness and financially strengthens health care systems. The program provides comprehensive care, improves health outcomes and health care system operations, reduces the inefficiencies of being uninsured, and drives cost-effective solutions to homelessness. Policymakers must protect Medicaid, not undermine it. Together with those organizations and individuals below, **we write to urge you to protect the Medicaid expansion provision and oppose changes that compromise eligibility or undermine financing for the Medicaid program.**

Respectfully,

Bobby Watts
CEO

National Organizations

Advocates for Community Health

Aiden Anthony LLC

The AIDS Institute

Any Positive Change Inc.

Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)

Catholic Health Association of the United States

Collaborative Solutions

Community Catalyst

Corporation for Supportive Housing

Drug Policy Alliance

Funders Together to End Homelessness

Hot's N Cot's

In Perfect Peace Ministries, Inc

MHP (Minnesota Housing Partnership)

NASTAD

National Alliance to End Homelessness

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of Social Workers

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

National Coalition for the Homeless

National Council of Urban Indian Health

National Harm Reduction Coalition

National Homelessness Law Center

National League for Nursing

National Low Income Housing Coalition

Professional Association of Social Workers in HIV & AIDS

State and Local Organizations

Alabama

AIDS Alabama

Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama

Alaska

Catholic Social Services – Alaska

Arizona

Catholic Community Services of Southern Az

Circle the City

California

Access Support Network

Access Support Network - Monterey County

Adventist Health Care

APLA Health

DAP Health

Dientes Community Dental Care

GLIDE

Health Care for the Homeless Co-Applicant Board

Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction (HACHR)

Keck School of Medicine USC Street Medicine

Los Angeles LGBT Center

Mobile Clinic Project at UCLA

Kedren Community Health Center, Inc.

Northeast Valley Health Corporation

San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium

SF Hep B Free - Bay Area

The Sidewalk Project

Up North Harm Reduction

West County Health Centers Inc.

Colorado

Ascending To Health Respite Care

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Connecticut

Community Health Center Association of CT (CHC/ACT)

Partnership For Strong Communities (PSC)

Delaware

Housing Alliance Delaware

District of Columbia

Christ House

Unity Health Care

Florida

Camillus Health Concern, Inc.

Community Health of South Florida, Inc.

Genesis Community Health, Inc.

Health Care Center for the Homeless

Georgia

AID Atlanta Inc

Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc.

Hawaii

Ka Hale A Ke Ola Homeless Resource center

Illinois

AIDS Foundation Chicago

Center for Housing and Health

The Night Ministry

Access Living

DuPage County Health Department

Housing Action Illinois

Illinois Partners for Human Service

Illinois Primary Health Care Association

Illinois Public Health Association

Impact Behavioral Health Partners

Lawndale Christian Healthcare

Legal Council for Health Justice

The Boulevard of Chicago

Kentucky

HealthFirst Bluegrass

Maryland

Baltimore Health Care for the Homeless

Massachusetts

Boston Health Care for the Homeless

Lynn Community Health Center

Michigan

HOPE Shelters

MI Coalition Against Homelessness

Minnesota

Alluma, Inc.

Bob Tavani House for Medical Respite

Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless

MN COPE

Missouri

Haven Recovery

Montana

Indian Family Health Clinic of Great Falls Inc

Nevada

Eddy House

HELP Of Southern Nevada

Nevada Housing Coalition

UNLV Health - Mojave Counseling

New Jersey

Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey

New Mexico

Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey

New York

Care For the Homeless

Center for Urban Community Services/Janian Medical Care

Health x Housing Lab at NYU Langone Health

The Health & Housing Consortium

Health Justice

North Carolina

Lincoln Community Health Center

Ohio

Center for Respite Care, Inc.

Joseph & Mary's Home

Oregon

Central City Concern

Northwest Human Services

Pennsylvania

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

Community Health Net

Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

Puerto Rico

Coalición de Coaliciones Pro Personas sin Hogar de PR, Inc.

South Carolina

New Horizon Family Health Services

Tennessee

Welcome Home of Chattanooga

Christ Community Health Servicers

Open Table Nashville

Utah

Fourth Street Clinic

The INN Between

Washington

Yakima Neighborhood Health Service

Individual Sign On

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Amy Sparks

Arizona
Keeley Butters
Kate Chandler
Tripti Choudhury
Sharon Dipasupil
William Ellert
Lori Holmen
Stephanie Martinez
Patricia Rodriguez

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Shaquan Brown
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