



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

May 8, 2023

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker McCarthy, and Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization representing the largest group of nonprofit health care providers in the nation with more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, service providers and organizations, I urge you to protect the programs and policies vital to underserved and vulnerable communities as you negotiate proposed legislation to raise the debt ceiling.

Specifically, we ask that you build on bipartisan initiatives that supported access to social safety net programs like Medicaid, and ensured the country's move towards clean energy sources to address the threats of climate change, and reject cuts to federal programs that are critical to our patients and the communities we serve.

Catholic health care providers have been at the front line of our nation's health care response in supporting our communities during the pandemic since 2020. They continue to face challenges as increased labor, drug, and supply costs—compounded by shortages of nurses, medical staff and supplies—have created ongoing and unsustainable negative margins and workforce burnout in our hospitals and long-term care facilities. We ask that Congress support the work of our members by protecting the important policies and programs, which are critical to the health of communities, in the debt ceiling or budget negotiations:

- **Build on the bipartisan successes in the Medicaid program that support and protect access to health care for millions of low-income individuals, children, and families.** Including work requirements will create another burden for both beneficiaries and states that are in the process of conducting eligibility redeterminations in Medicaid, while causing tens of millions of beneficiaries to unnecessarily lose coverage because of paperwork errors. Our members are working nationally to partner with their state Medicaid agencies to ensure that coverage losses are mitigated through our *Protect What's Precious* national campaign and we hope that Congress can continue working in a bipartisan way to help individuals and families maintain their coverage.
- **Protect the historic investments that address climate change and promote clean energy.** Combatting climate change and protecting our environment have been an essential part of our work as Catholic health care. CHA and our members support efforts to transition the country to 100% clean, renewable energy. We are called to care for the earth and one another, especially those who are disproportionately burdened by environmental harm-- pregnant women, children, people with pre-existing conditions and people who experience poverty are more sensitive to a changing climate.
- **Reject cuts to vital programs that promote health equity, address the maternal health crisis, invest in programs that promote public health and address the social determinants of health across the federal government.** Catholic health care has a long history of responding to community needs and plays a leading role in addressing the social determinants of health. We are

concerned that proposals to cut funding across the federal government will have a devastating impact on important programs funded by discretionary spending, which are essential federal counterpart to the work of our members on the ground.

As Catholic health care providers, we are committed to reducing health disparities, promoting health equity and ensuring that everyone in our nation has access to affordable health care. We urge you to think of these important priorities as Congress legislates a solution regarding the debt ceiling. We thank you for your leadership on behalf of all the communities we are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,


Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO

CC: Members of Congress