



November 10, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA, the national leadership organization representing more than 2,200 catholic hospitals and long-term care providers), Catholic Charities USA (which represents 167 local Catholic Charities agencies serving 15 million people in need across the country and the U.S. territories), and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Domestic Policy Committee, and in line with the USCCB's recent [letter](#) imploring Congress to prioritize policies that support women, children, and families, we urge you to establish 12-month Medicaid postpartum coverage and Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance continuous coverage for children as required federal benefits.

As health care and social service providers and those working with people of faith and communities in need across the country each day, we see the heart-breaking struggle and fear faced by low-income mothers and families who lack access to quality and affordable health care. These new mothers confront the daunting task of prioritizing limited financial resources to their children while too often going without basic health coverage for themselves. While often a heroic sacrifice, it is one that our nation and our communities must never demand of those who live in poverty.

We believe that affordable health care is both a basic human right and a necessity for a dignified life and the flourishing of families. Health care coverage must respect the inherent dignity and right to life of every human being. As Catholics, it is also a part of the realization of our work to extend the love and healing mission of Jesus to those in need. Through this work, and with particular attention to those most in need and vulnerable, we join our voices to urge you to take action in the remaining days of this Congress to ensure that all mothers have access to Medicaid coverage for one year after delivery.

The United States has the highest maternal mortality rate among all developed countries in the world, with over half of these deaths occurring after delivery or postpartum (1/3 of which occur beyond one

week postpartum). Despite this reality, and the fact that 4 in 10 births in the U.S. are paid for by Medicaid, mandatory postpartum coverage still extends only to 60 days after delivery.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) provided an important first step in addressing this injustice by giving states the option to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage for one-year postpartum. However, this option is only available for the next five years and only if states choose to prioritize the health of mothers. Making postpartum coverage mandatory for all Medicaid programs would not only save lives but also give new mothers and their children the security and support they need during the earliest days of their children's lives.

We therefore urge you during the remainder of this Congress to make the 12-month Medicaid postpartum coverage and Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance continuous coverage for children a required federal benefit.

Thank you for your consideration,



Sister Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO
Catholic Health Association
of the United States



Sister Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Catholic Charities USA



Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chairman, Committee on
Domestic Justice
and Human Development