

April 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States Congress  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Majority Leader  
United States Congress  
H-204 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-220 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

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

As Congress continues its response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are writing as the members of the Medical Transportation Access Coalition (MTAC) ([www.MTACCoalition.org](http://www.MTACCoalition.org)) to request that you include legislation to protect non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) in the Medicaid program if future relief packages are considered.

NEMT is a critically important benefit that has been part of every state Medicaid program since the earliest days of Medicaid yet it has never been explicitly required in statute. All states are required to provide Medicaid beneficiaries who lack access to transportation with NEMT services so they can travel to necessary medical appointments. While medical appointments vary by state, common needs beneficiaries use NEMT to access treatment including kidney dialysis, substance use disorder (SUD) treatments, mental and behavioral health appointments and primary care visits. The NEMT benefit is used by a very small percentage (roughly 7 percent) of the Medicaid population and accounts for less than 1 percent of total Medicaid spending. Yet for those who rely upon NEMT – typically the very sick and the very poor – it is a lifeline.

Bipartisan legislation that would authorize the NEMT benefit in the Social Security Act – including requirements for states to maintain programs to ensure appropriate use of the benefit – is pending in both the House and Senate, with a House bill recently clearing a key subcommittee. With our nation's healthcare system straining to address the needs of COVID-19 atop of other demands, now is the time for Congress to finally act to ensure the NEMT benefit is available for Medicaid's most vulnerable beneficiaries. As we write, NEMT providers are a part of the healthcare workforce that is on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. Those beneficiaries who rely on NEMT don't have the luxury of deferring an appointment, like a

dialysis session, or finding other transit options. NEMT providers and their partners are acting aggressively to ensure this vital service remains available while taking measures to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19. These measures include reducing the number of beneficiaries in multi-load transports, ensuring appropriate cleaning of vehicles as supplies exist, adjusting routes to account for healthcare facilities that may be accepting only those patients with the virus, and supporting the overall response.

Many NEMT providers and partners are also stepping up during this national crisis to meet the demand for both medical and non-medical goods and services, such as durable medical equipment and food. These activities underscore how NEMT plays a critical role in filling gaps in the health system and addressing social determinants across the spectrum in good times and bad.

Finally, a number of studies over the years have explored and validated the tremendous return on investment associated with NEMT in Medicaid and more broadly. The modest cost of transporting a beneficiary to a dialysis session or to a doctor's appointment to help manage multiple chronic conditions will be far less than the costs that will be incurred if such appointments are missed and the beneficiary requires more intensive and expensive interventions.

We urge you to take this opportunity – right now – to permanently protect NEMT in Medicaid, and we thank you in advance for giving this request your fullest consideration.

Sincerely,

#### Medical Transportation Access Coalition

American Psychiatric Association	Lyft
Anthem	Medical Transportation Management
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare	National Alliance on Mental Illness
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness	National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Association for Community Affiliated Plans	National Council for Behavioral Health
BlueCross BlueShield Association	National Health Care for the Homeless Council
Community Transportation Association of America	National Rural Health Association
Coordinated Transportation Solutions	Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America
Dialysis Patient Citizens	Southeasterns
Easterseals	Tennessee Carriers
IntelliRide	Uber Health
LogistiCare   Circulation	United Spinal Association

CC: The Honorable Charles Grassley  
The Honorable Ron Wyden  
The Honorable Frank Pallone  
The Honorable Greg Walden  
The Honorable Anna Eshoo  
The Honorable Michael Burgess  
The Honorable Buddy Carter  
The Honorable Tony Cardenas  
The Honorable Sherrod Brown