



May 5, 2020

The unprecedented emergency presented by the COVID-19 pandemic poses an extreme threat to the health and economic survival of workers, families, and retirees around the world.

Before the onset of rising unemployment and economic distress, many Americans were already experiencing difficulty coping with a dysfunctional healthcare system to obtain routine health maintenance, acute and chronic care, and long-term care of the elderly and disabled.

The viral pandemic has brought our health care and public health systems to the verge of breakdown while making timely and affordable access even more difficult.

While we believe that the best long-term solution is establishment of a single-payer Medicare-for-All national health program, we recognize the value of two interim measures the federal government can and must take immediately to protect our security and ensure our survival:

- I. Grant universal access to health care to prevent mass casualties and bring the epidemic under control.
- II. Alleviate the excessive costs that have made health care unaffordable for so many.

The **Health Care Emergency Guarantee Act** would accomplish these measures:

- A. For individuals who already have public or private insurance, Medicare will cover the deductibles, co-payments, and other cost-sharing for all medically necessary health care, including prescription drugs.
- B. For uninsured people, Medicare will fully cover the cost of medically necessary health care, including prescription drugs for which Medicare will pay the same price as the VA.

These provisions will cover all US residents and remain in effect until the federal government certifies that an FDA-approved vaccination for COVID-19 is widely available to the public. The legislation also bans surprise billing and balance billing, and prevents private insurance companies from increasing copayments and deductibles, or decreasing coverage, for the duration of the health care crisis.

The undersigned organizations call on our elected officials to pass the **Health Care Emergency Guarantee Act** with the utmost urgency.

Sincerely,

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