

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1806

December 14, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate Majority Leader

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
U.S. Senate Democratic Leader

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer:

We urge you to include a four-committee, bipartisan agreement to end surprise medical billing in the year-end spending legislation.

The proposal agreed to by the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) and three U.S. House of Representatives committees will hold patients harmless from surprise medical bills and provide a fair arbitration process to resolve disputes between health care providers and insurers without undermining strong state laws to address this issue that are already on the books. This bill does not include so-called “rate setting,” nor does it include a threshold to access the arbitration process to determine out-of-network payments to health care providers.

The Bipartisan Working Group, including U.S. Senators Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Todd Young (R-IN), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Tom Carper (D-DE), released a bill in May of 2019 to protect patients from surprise bills, called the STOP Surprise Medical Bills Act. Solving surprise billing has been fully vetted by the Senate HELP Committee, which reported similar legislation by a bipartisan vote of 20-3. All three House committees who support this proposal have passed comparable legislation and the bipartisan, bicameral deal enjoys the support of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Furthermore, the four-committee, bipartisan agreement has been greatly improved by the ongoing advocacy of the more than two dozen senators led by Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D. and Senator Maggie Hassan.

Inclusion of this agreement to end surprise medical billing will also allow approximately \$18 billion in savings to be used to fully fund Community Health Centers and other crucial primary care programs for four years.

The practice of surprise medical billing needs to end. This practice has been especially damaging during COVID-19 when patients receive large unexpected bills weeks after they go to the emergency room.

There will never be a broader bipartisan, bicameral solution to ending surprise medical billing and we should deal with it now. Patients cannot wait any longer.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill Cassidy, M.D.

/s/ Margaret Wood Hassan

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

/s/ Lamar Alexander

Lamar Alexander
United States Senator

/s/ Patty Murray

Patty Murray
United States Senator

/s/ Lisa Murkowski

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

/s/ Doug Jones

Doug Jones
United States Senator

/s/ John Kennedy

John Kennedy
United States Senator

/s/ Michael F. Bennet

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

/s/ Rob Portman

Rob Portman
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ Susan Collins

Susan Collins
United States Senator

/s/ Sheldon Whitehouse

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/ Lindsey O. Graham

Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator

/s/ Tina Smith

Tina Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Mitt Romney

Mitt Romney
United States Senator

/s/ Robert Menendez

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/s/ John Cornyn

John Cornyn
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/s/ Todd Young

Todd Young
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

/s/ Cindy Hyde-Smith

Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/ Kevin Cramer

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

/s/ John Hoeven

John Hoeven
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Mike Braun

Mike Braun
United States Senator