

June 30, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong support for the bipartisan *Medicaid Reentry Act (S.285)* and urge the Committee to consider the legislation, which would allow Medicaid to cover health services thirty days before an individual is released from prison or jail.

The Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP) prohibits the use of federal funds and services for medical care provided to inmates of public institutions, which negatively impacts rehabilitation outcomes and puts a financial strain on local budgets. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than half of those in the criminal justice system suffer from a mental health condition and of those with serious mental health condition, approximately 75 percent also have a co-occurring substance use disorder. Additionally, individuals reentering society after incarceration are 129 times more likely than the general population to die of a drug overdose during the first two weeks post-release.

Allowing incarcerated individuals to receive services covered by Medicaid 30-days prior to their release from jail or prison will expand access to vital mental health and addiction services, thereby decreasing recidivism and improving health outcomes for individuals reentering the community. Furthermore, by investing in prevention, the *Medicaid Reentry Act* will provide savings on healthcare and criminal justice costs for jurisdictions across the country.

The *Medicaid Reentry Act* will also help keep everyone in the community healthy, especially as we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuous health coverage is vital for people to stay healthy and be able to access the care they need, when they need it. Incarcerated individuals are at particular risk of contracting COVID-19.[1] Making sure these individuals have uninterrupted health coverage, particularly during the transition period when they are reentering their communities, is essential for keeping them healthy, limiting spread of the virus, and protecting the health of the community overall.

Passage of this vital legislation would take a necessary and important step toward improving health outcomes for incarcerated individuals, reducing recidivism, and restoring the federal, state, and local partnership in delivering safety-net benefits. The *Medicaid Reentry Act* has broad bipartisan and bicameral support, facing only procedural hurdles in its path to passage.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to addressing the mental health and justice-related needs of local communities. Our organizations stand ready to answer any questions and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

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[1] Hawks L, Woolhandler S, McCormick D. COVID-19 in Prisons and Jails in the United States. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2020;180(8):1041–1042. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.1856

A New PATH  
ACOJA Consulting LLC  
ACT UP Philadelphia  
Addiction Policy Forum  
Addiction Professionals of North Carolina  
Advocates, Inc.  
AIDS United  
AIM Angels In Motion  
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work  
American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Jail Association  
American Medical Student Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
AMERSA, Inc.  
Angels In Motion (AIM)  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
ASSOCIATION FOR AMBULATORY BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Behavioral Health Association of Providers  
Black and Latinx Community Control  
CADA of Northwest Louisiana  
California Consortium of Addiction Programs & Professionals  
Casa de Salud  
Center For Community Alternatives  
Center for Disability Rights  
Center for Employment Opportunities  
Center for Health Justice Inc.  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Central City Concern (Portland Metro Area, Oregon)  
Chicago Drug Users' Union  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office  
College & Community Fellowship  
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)  
Community Catalyst  
Community Medical Services  
Community Oriented Correctional Health Services  
Correctional Association of New York  
Correctional Leaders Association

CURE (Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants)  
Drexel University Health Equity Advancement Lab  
EAC Network  
Elevyst  
Equal Justice Under Law  
Exodus Transitional Community  
Faces & Voices of Recovery  
Families USA  
Forward Justice Maryland  
Friends of Safehouse  
From Prison Cells to PhD  
Futures Without Violence  
Greenburger Center for Social and Criminal Justice  
Health in Justice Action Lab  
Hearts on a Wire  
HIV Medicine Association  
Hour Children  
Inseparable  
Interfaith Action for Human Rights  
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium  
International Community Corrections Association  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNY  
Justice for Families  
Justice Innovations  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Leadership for Justice Innovations, LLC  
Legal Action Center  
Legal Action Center (LAC)  
Live4Lali  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)  
Major Cities Chiefs Association  
Major County Sheriffs of America  
Mental Health Association in New York State  
Mothers On the Inside  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
NACBHDD and NARMH  
National Alliance for Medication Assisted Recovery  
National Association For Behavioral Healthcare  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Commission on Correctional Health Care

National Council of Churches  
National Criminal Justice Association  
National Federation of Families  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National HIRE Network  
National Juvenile Justice Network  
National Safety Council  
National Sheriffs' Association  
National Urban League  
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)  
National Council for Mental Wellbeing  
New Hour for Women & Children II  
No Health without Mental Health (NHMH)  
Operation in My Back Yard  
Operation Restoration  
Operation Save Our City  
Osborne Association  
P.A.I.N. (Prescription Addiction Intervention Now)  
Partnership to End Addiction  
Philadelphia Overdose Prevention Network  
Philadelphia Participatory Research Collective  
Prison Policy Initiative  
Reproductive Justice Inside  
Safer Foundation  
Shatterproof  
Silent Cry Inc  
SMART Recovery  
Southern Tier AIDS Program/Southern Tier Care Coordination  
Stop Stigma Now  
TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities)  
Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc.  
The American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine  
The Council of State Governments Justice Center  
The Fortune Society  
The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention  
The Kennedy Forum  
Trauma Informed  
Treatment Advocacy Center  
Treatment Communities of America  
Trust for America's Health  
Well Being Trust  
WestCare Foundation  
Workers Revolutionary Collective

cc:

Senator Tammy Baldwin  
Senator Mike Braun  
Senator Sherrod Brown  
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse  
Representative Brian Fitzpatrick  
Representative Alcee Hastings  
Representative David McKinley  
Representative Paul Tonko  
Representative David Trone  
Representative Mike Turner  
Representative Lauren Underwood