March 21, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, United States Senate
S-220, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

As both chambers continue work on additional measures to protect the health and economic security of Americans caused by COVID-19, we write to urge you to consider requiring the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to temporarily suspend the 2-year waiting period for Medicare coverage for individuals with Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

Research has long demonstrated that individuals with SSDI in the 2-year waiting period often forego medical treatments, stop adhering to prescription drugs and other medications, and further compromise their health care.

While the Affordable Care Act (ACA) increased options for coverage for Americans under 65, including those with SSDI in the Medicare waiting period, variations across states in their marketplace plans and Medicaid programs have meant that many individuals with disabilities are left without affordable care.
Ensuring those with SSDI can access Medicare coverage right away is critical not only for reducing barriers to care, but also for our health care providers and states by reducing the burden on state Medicaid programs and uncompensated care across acute-care settings at a time when they are struggling with capacity. Eliminating the 2-year period for those with SSDI until the current COVID-19 crisis is fully behind us is an important component of any meaningful package of solutions to the pandemic.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the health and economic well-being of American families and our health care providers during this critical time. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress
Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

Jesus G. “Chuy” Garcia  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress