

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 7, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

In April, we wrote to request that you open a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) federally-run Marketplace, as it was already clear that the COVID-19 crisis was creating an unprecedented and unforeseen need for health care coverage. We are disappointed that you chose not to do so, blocking millions of uninsured Americans from being able to purchase comprehensive health insurance and further exacerbating the crisis by discouraging them from seeking testing or treatment due to a lack of coverage. Now, more than three months since our original request, and with the benefit of additional data, we write with renewed urgency to request that you authorize an SEP for the ACA and to ensure guaranteed access to Medicare coverage for seniors and retirees.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, an estimated 5.4 million workers have become uninsured because of job losses—the highest ever annual increase. Of the 13 states that operate a state-based marketplace, 12 have announced an SEP, and more than 266,000 people have enrolled in them so far. Additionally, recent surveys indicate that people who lost their jobs in states that rely on HealthCare.gov are more likely to require an SEP to enroll in health coverage, because they were uninsured before losing their jobs. Some estimates suggest that 600,000 people would have signed up for health insurance before the end of June, had your administration authorized an SEP.

It is clear that many people who want insurance are not able to purchase it because you have chosen not to offer an SEP, and many of the millions of Americans who have recently become uninsured due to job losses are unaware that they qualify for federally-subsidized health care coverage. You could dramatically expand the number of Americans with health insurance during this critical time by reopening the ACA exchanges and using the power of your office to make people aware of the availability of affordable coverage. It should not take an act of Congress to get Americans covered through an SEP. However, the HEROES Act, which passed the House in May, includes a provision to establish an ACA SEP; we support that provision.

Additionally, every year there are tens of thousands of recent retirees and seniors in this country, who for one reason or another, fail to enroll in Medicare. These enrollment missteps can lead to lifetime fees, lengthy gaps in coverage and delayed access to needed care. Given everything we know about COVID-19 and how it has devastated our seniors, it is essential that all older

Americans can secure access to health coverage—without gaps or delay. We urge your administration to take immediate steps, through equitable relief or other mechanisms available to you, to ensure seniors can enroll in Medicare and access their earned benefits. Further, we support the provisions included in the HEROES Act to establish a Part B Special Enrollment Period (SEP) during the public health emergency.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage communities and has now infected three million Americans. The urgent need for comprehensive, affordable health care coverage has only increased since we wrote to you in April to request that you open an ACA SEP. We urge that you take seriously the challenges that millions of people are facing in our country and reopen enrollment for the federally-run ACA Marketplace and to utilize the tools you have to ensure access to the Medicare Program.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

/s/ Jon Tester

Jon Tester
United States Senator

/s/ Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Udall

Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Kamala D. Harris

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed

Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/ Angus S. King, Jr.

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/ Cory A. Booker

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ Doug Jones

Doug Jones
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Carper

Tom Carper
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

/s/ Debbie Stabenow

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator