

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 117TH CONGRESS

Lutheran Services in America and our network of over 300 health care and human services organizations work each day to enable people throughout America to reach their full potential. We urge lawmakers to take the following actions in the 117th Congress.

Priority #1: Strengthen the Nonprofit Health and Human Services Sector

Ensure that front line health and human services providers have the support they require to meet the needs of their communities and to restore their operations and financial stability following the COVID-19 public health emergency.

- Provide continued funding for forgivable loans and targeted grants for all nonprofit health and human services providers, including those with 500 or more employees, to ensure their business continuity following the widespread financial and other impacts of COVID-19, and to enable them to pay wages, salaries and benefits to retain staff, meet the greater demand for services, and hire unemployed workers.
- Urge the investment by state and local governments of a substantial amount of their \$350 billion in aid from the American Rescue Plan Act in the work of nonprofits to secure the greatest impact for the public good.
- Reimburse 100% of the cost of unemployment insurance benefits paid by nonprofits who self-fund these benefits.
- Prepare providers, via updated technology and staff training, for the transition to value-based payments.

Priority #2: Ensure Equitable Health Outcomes for All Americans

Reduce health disparities and improve outcomes across demographic groups by addressing key social determinants of health, including housing, and ensure equitable access to high-quality, affordable health care for all.

- Maintain and increase Medicaid and Medicare funding, including an increased Medicaid FMAP, and fairly reimburse providers.
- Increase investment in home and community-based services (HCBS) for older adults and persons with disabilities to enable health and human services providers to expand services and eliminate the nationwide waitlist of 850,000 so consumers can receive needed services in their homes and communities.
- Permanently integrate high-quality, widely available telehealth into the U.S. health care system.
- Protect continued coverage of the previously underserved and people with pre-existing conditions.
- Decriminalize homelessness and increase investment in and access to affordable housing stock.

Priority #3: Strengthen the Direct Care Workforce

Secure sufficient funding and support to expand and train a more sustainable workforce.

- Secure higher reimbursement rates that more adequately compensate for services provided and allow front line nonprofit health and human services organizations to offer increased wages and benefits.
- Build and fund programs and innovative models of care that directly address recruitment, training and retention of a well-qualified workforce.
- Refine overly technical requirements for providers and their workers to help maintain workforce levels.