



October 18, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to express our strong support for the bipartisan legislative agreement reached by Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee to help stabilize and improve the individual insurance market. **We ask that you move the bipartisan Alexander-Murray legislation to the floor of your respective chambers for favorable passage as soon as possible.**

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 152,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

We believe the Alexander-Murray legislation, if passed into law, would help stabilize and strengthen state marketplaces just as the 2018 plan year enrollment period is about to begin. ACP repeatedly opposed previous attempts by Congress to “repeal and replace” the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and cut the Medicaid program because those efforts violated our *first, do no harm* [criteria](#). At the same time, ACP also urged Congress to instead move forward with the development of bipartisan legislation that would stabilize the health insurance marketplace, create competition among insurers, and lower the cost of health care for all Americans. We therefore commend the bipartisan process that included four hearings and led to the agreement between Senators Alexander and Murray.

The Alexander-Murray legislation funds the ACA’s cost-sharing reduction (CSR) payments for over two years and provides states added flexibility under the ACA’s Section 1332 state innovation waiver program. ACP, in its own [statement for record](#) to the Senate HELP Committee on September 14, 2017, specifically recommended ensuring the funding of CSR payments and encouraging state innovation by

bringing more choice and competition into insurance markets under Section 1332 waivers as long as there was no rolling back of current coverage, benefits and other consumer protections guaranteed by the ACA and other federal laws and regulations. Not only does Alexander-Murray restore and guarantee CSR payments for the rest of 2017 and all of 2018 and 2019, it gives states meaningful flexibility—such as shortening the waiver review period and streamlining the approval process overall—while maintaining the crucial “guardrails” that protect important consumer protections and essential benefits. In addition, the Alexander-Murray bill requires funding for vital outreach and enrollment engagement, something that ACP also urged in its September 14th statement.

The College strongly believes in the *first, do no harm* principle. The Alexander-Murray bill is an important first step to moving away from the fundamentally flawed and harmful policies that would have resulted from previous congressional proposals. **We urge you to move forward without delay to pass the Alexander-Murray proposal into law in order for its provisions to be implemented as quickly as possible.** Alexander-Murray also provides a foundation for future bipartisan cooperation and compromise to improve America’s healthcare system. The College welcomes the opportunity to share our ideas for bipartisan solutions for improving current law that would help make healthcare better, more accessible, and more affordable for patients. We stand ready to lend our help in continuing such efforts, as proposed in [ACP’s Prescription for a Forward-Looking Agenda to Improve American Health Care](#).

Sincerely,



Jack Ende, MD, MACP
President

Cc: Members of the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate