

February 8, 2018

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

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express our support for passage of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2018, as announced on February 7. We believe this legislation takes many positive steps, not only by providing funding and stability for many important health care programs, but also for making improvements that will allow physicians, Congress, and the Administration to continue working together to implement new payment systems focused on quality and value.

Among the provisions that we support are:

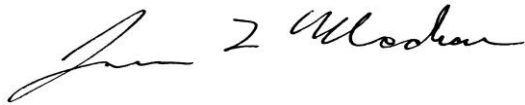
- Making technical improvements in the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) that would promote a smooth transition to the new Quality Payment Program (QPP);
- Extending the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for four more years, through 2027;
- Removing the current mandate that electronic health record standards become more stringent over time;
- Providing two years of funding for community health centers, the National Health Service Corps, and the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education program;
- Repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board; and
- Providing additional support for Medicaid in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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We are also pleased that the agreement provides additional resources to support efforts to combat our nation's deadly opioid epidemic, as well as increased funding for the National Institutes of Health and Veterans Affairs hospitals and clinics, among other critical investments.

We believe this agreement offers a good framework for further bipartisan collaboration on improvements to the nation's health care system and urge its passage by the House and Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke.

James L. Madara, MD