

July 25, 2019

The Honorable Cheri Bustos
United States Representative
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Bustos:

On behalf of the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA) and its more than 200 hospitals and nearly 50 health systems, we are pleased to support the *Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2019*, which takes an important step toward strengthening coordination between local, state and federal government agencies, as well as with other stakeholders, in order to improve social determinants of health for those participating in the Medicaid program. Illinois hospitals and health systems have long invested in addressing social determinants of health as part of their mission to care for the patients and communities. However, in order to meaningfully shift the paradigm of healthcare to focus on population health and value based care, a more coordinated, targeted approach is needed among public and private stakeholders.

Specifically, your legislation would provide up to \$25 million in grants to be awarded to state, local or tribal governments for the purposes of convening and coordinating relevant government entities and other stakeholders to develop a “Social Determinants Accelerator Plan,” which would seek to improve at least one health outcome and one social outcome for the targeted population. Grants would be awarded through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in consultation with a Social Determinants Interagency Council, which would include program experts from multiple federal agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Labor, and the Department of Agriculture, as well as officials from state and local governments and community-based organizations.

Accelerator plans would target a group of high-need Medicaid patients, such as homeless individuals or nursing home patients and identify the key outcomes to be achieved through improved coordination of health and non-health services. Applicants would be required to include a plan for linking data across programs to measure the impact and return-on-investment for taxpayers, underscoring the importance of interventions that harness interoperability and cost-effectiveness for sustainable, long-term change.

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July 25, 2019

Page 2

Thank you for your continued work to ensure all Illinoisans – no matter where they live or the circumstances in their lives – have the opportunity to reach their full potential for health. We look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation, and once implemented, we will encourage the State of Illinois to actively pursue accelerator grants in order to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable populations in both rural and urban communities.

Sincerely,

A.J. Wilhelmi
President & CEO