

February 4, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd Doggett
U.S. House of Representatives
2307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Doggett:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners, including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is pleased to support the Ensuring Coverage in Public Health Emergencies Act of 2021 (H.R. 526).

Every American deserves access to health coverage, yet millions remain uninsured. We simply need to do better in addressing this issue, particularly during a global pandemic. The AHA applauded the Biden Administration's recent executive order directing the Department of Health and Human Services to reopen enrollment in the Health Insurance Marketplaces. More than 30 million individuals are currently uninsured and could gain access to coverage during this special enrollment period (SEP), including nearly 9 million eligible for free or subsidized coverage.

Your legislation ensures that a future public health emergency declaration would automatically trigger a SEP, like after the loss of a job or birth of a child, to allow consumers to apply for coverage through the Marketplaces or their employer-sponsored plans. Health care coverage is critical to ensuring patients' access to care, which supports their own individual health and helps prevent the further spread of COVID-19 or another virus during a future public health emergency. The economic stress of a public health emergency can cost millions of jobs and therefore increase the number of individuals and families without coverage. This legislation will help more Americans get and stay covered by guaranteeing access to an open enrollment period during future public health emergencies.

Thank you for your leadership in promoting access to coverage and care. Again, we are pleased to support this legislation and look forward to working with you to achieve its passage.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President

