

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

September 5, 2021

The Honorable Charles S. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Madam Speaker Pelosi,

As Congress moves forward to craft the major economic recovery package, we, the leaders and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus write once again to strongly urge you to close the Medicaid “coverage gap” with a permanent and comprehensive federal policy. As we wrote to you in June, closing this is one of the single most important steps we can take to reduce racial health inequities across the United States, as 60 percent of the 2.2 million uninsured people who remain without a pathway to health coverage -- despite the promise of the Affordable Care Act -- are Black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander. This health policy investment under consideration would significantly expand health care coverage and reduce health coverage disparities.

As we previously wrote, people in the coverage gap have been deprived of the wide-ranging benefits of Medicaid expansion, including the reduction of overall mortality associated with cancer, cardiovascular disease, and liver disease. Expansion has decreased racial disparities in coverage, affordability and health outcomes, most notably maternal and infant mortality. Expansion provides coverage to people before they become pregnant, providing access to vital pre-conception care and care in the critical early weeks and months of pregnancy, making expansion a key component of our strategy to address the Black maternal health crisis.

As the process unfolds on this recovery package, we need to stress that this legislation presents a unique, historic opportunity to close the gap in coverage for millions of people who have no way to get it and get them coverage once and for all. We need a permanent, comprehensive solution to give them certainty and security that they can rest assured that their coverage will continue.

The coronavirus pandemic has continued to illuminate the far-reaching, fatal consequences of inadequate access to healthcare. Addressing the Medicaid coverage gap is critical to correcting decades of unacceptable and unjust denials of health coverage to underserved people, especially people of color. The forthcoming recovery package should include policies that permanently

close the coverage gap to significantly reduce racial health disparities and ensure all Americans have access to basic healthcare. We look forward to working with you to reduce racial disparities associated with the coverage gap and once and for all realize the promise of the Affordable Care Act for all Americans regardless of where they live.

Thank you for taking our views into consideration.


Sincerely,



Robin L. Kelly

Member of Congress

Chair, CBC Health  
Braintrust



Yvette Clarke

Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty

Member of Congress

Chair, Congressional Black  
Caucus



Raul Ruiz, M.D.

Member of Congress

Chair, Congressional  
Hispanic Caucus