



*We Will Empower Bold Change to Elevate
Human Flourishing.SM*

December 7, 2023

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization representing more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, service providers, and organizations, I write to express our concerns with the *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act* being considered on the floor of the House of Representatives next week.

Catholic health care providers have been at the front line of our nation's health care response to the pandemic by supporting our communities. They continue to face challenges as increased labor, drug, and supply costs—compounded by shortages of nurses, medical staff, and supplies—have created ongoing and unsustainable negative margins and workforce burnout in our hospitals and long-term care facilities. We ask that Congress support the work of our members by protecting the essential policies and programs that are critical to the health of communities by preventing any cuts in federal spending in Medicare and Medicaid.

Specifically, **we urge you to reject policies that reduce reimbursements under the Medicare program, especially site-neutral proposals.** The current language in the *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act* would decrease Medicare payments for services provided in hospital outpatient departments. This provision fails to account for differences in care levels between hospital outpatient departments (HOPDs) and other care sites. HOPDs treat patients who are sicker and have more chronic conditions than those treated in physician offices or ambulatory surgical centers, as they are better equipped to handle complications and emergencies. The cost of care delivered in hospitals and health systems must take into account the unique benefits that they provide to their communities, such as round-the-clock access to critical care. This site-neutral proposal also must be rejected in light of providers' continued fiscal challenges, especially in rural and underserved areas.

As Catholic health care providers, we are committed to reducing health disparities, promoting health equity and ensuring that everyone in our nation has access to affordable health care. We urge you to think of these important priorities as Congress legislates solutions to bolster our nation's health care system. We thank you for your leadership on behalf of all the communities we are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,


Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO