

The Honorable Frank Pallone Jr.  
Chair, House Energy and Commerce  
Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6115

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Ranking Member, House Energy and  
Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6115

The Honorable Richard Neal  
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Ranking Member, House Ways and Means  
Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6200

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
Ranking Member, Senate Finance  
Committee  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6200

To the Honorable Chairs and Ranking Members:

The 60 undersigned advocacy organizations are writing to ask for your support of HR 2080, the Seniors Access to Vaccines Ensured (SAVE) Act of 2021. This commonsense legislation will create a temporary Medicare non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) benefit during the length of the public health emergency to transport seniors and persons with disabilities to and from COVID vaccination appointments. This legislation would be limited to those beneficiaries that do not already qualify for NEMT through dual-eligibility status and do not have access to other transportation options.

According to data from the Kaiser Family Foundation, only about 12 percent of Medicare beneficiaries are full Medicare-Medicaid dual-eligibles and, thus, have coverage for Medicaid's non-emergency transportation benefit. This means over 30 million Medicare beneficiaries do not have access to medical transportation through Medicare.<sup>1</sup> While many of these beneficiaries have other transportation options, this temporary benefit will provide a lifeline to the small subset of beneficiaries unable to get to and from their vaccination appointments. This could be particularly important for our rural constituents who may lack access to adequate public transportation to reach vaccination sites.

It is vital that we do everything we can to protect our most vulnerable seniors. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), individuals aged 65-74 are five times more likely to be hospitalized and 90 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than younger

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/dual-eligible-beneficiaries/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

individuals.<sup>2</sup> The SAVE Act of 2021 will help make sure these high-risk individuals have access to the protection they need.

In addition, data from the American Hospital Association (AHA) indicates that the lack of medical transportation is the leading cause of patient no-shows.<sup>3</sup> Although we have seen a bipartisan commitment to addressing social determinants of health like transportation in recent years, we must ensure that this commitment extends to seniors and persons with disabilities having adequate access to COVID-19 vaccines. If we expect to protect seniors and persons with disabilities and reach adequate immunization levels, we must remove every possible barrier to getting vaccinated.

We thank you in advance for giving this request your fullest consideration.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Alabama  
AIDS Alabama South  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
Allies for Independence  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Federation of County and Municipal Employees  
American Kidney Fund  
American Network of Community Options and Resources  
American Public Transportation Association  
American Therapeutic Recreation Association  
Amida Care  
The Arc of the United States  
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
California Dental Association  
Center for Autism and Related Disorders  
Center for Public Representation  
Children's Health Fund  
Community Catalyst  
Community Transportation Association of America  
Dialysis Patient Citizens  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.acuity-link.net/social-determinants-of-health-minding-the-transportation-gap-in-healthcare>

Easterseals  
Equality NC  
Families USA  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Greater WI Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR)  
Justice in Aging  
HIV Dental Alliance  
HIV Medicine Association  
Hudson Valley Community Services  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
Lutheran Services in America  
Medicare Rights Center  
Mental Health America  
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A)  
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)  
National Council on Aging  
National Healthcare for the Homeless Council  
Nevada Disability Coalition  
Pennsylvania Council on Independent Living  
Planned Parenthood of California  
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America  
SKIL Resource Center  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research  
The Transportation Alliance  
Treatment Action Group  
Treatment Communities of America  
United Spinal Association  
WI Association of Mobility Managers (WAMM)  
Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN)  
Wyoming Patients Coalition

cc:

Samantha Satchell, Professional Staff Member  
House Energy and Commerce Committee

Caleb Graf, Deputy General Counsel  
House Energy and Commerce Committee

Amy Hall, Staff Director  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Jay Gulshen, Professional Staff Member  
House Ways and Means Committee

Beth Vrabel, Deputy Chief Counsel/Senior Health Counsel  
Senate Finance Committee

Brett Baker, Deputy Health Policy Director  
Senate Finance Committee