



February 11, 2020

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member, House Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady:

I am writing on behalf of the National Alliance of Safety-Net Hospitals (NASH), a coalition of private safety-net hospitals, to express our support for the Ways and Means Committee's Consumer Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills of 2020.

NASH supports the bill's protection of patients from surprise medical bills for care they receive from out-of-network providers; we support the concept of patients receiving an "Advance Explanation of Benefits"; and most of all, we support a mediation process to be used when insurers and providers do not agree on appropriate payments that requires those parties to engage in good-faith negotiations; that employs mediated dispute resolution when those negotiations do not lead to agreement on payments; and that excludes from that mediation the use of specific, standard benchmark rates.

In NASH's view, the bill's exclusion of the use of benchmark rates is critical. Any mediation process that includes benchmark rates almost certainly gives payers little reason to negotiate in good faith with providers and would likely leave providers underpaid for their services in far too many situations. The Consumer Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills of 2020 reflects the Ways and Means Committee's clear understanding of this challenge and proposes a simple way to address it that is, NASH believes, fair to consumers, fair to providers, and fair to payers.

The National Alliance of Safety-Net Hospitals supports the Consumer Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills of 2020 and looks forward to working with your committee to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

Ellen Kugler, Esq.
Executive Director

