

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 30, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President Trump:

In light of the concerning trend of extreme, ideological policymaking at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the serious ethical concerns resulting in former Secretary Price's resignation, we write to outline priorities by which to evaluate any nominee for Secretary of HHS. This role impacts the health, wellbeing, and financial security of virtually every household in the United States on a day to day basis. We will closely scrutinize any potential nominee to ensure he or she is first and foremost a champion for policies that put patients and families first and stands up to this Administration's harmful, politically-driven agenda, with particular attention to whether the nominee can be expected to do the following:

1. Support a health care system that provides critical consumer protections and benefits, especially for people with pre-existing conditions and vulnerable populations;
2. Support efforts to reduce health care costs and improve quality, especially for low-income patients and families;
3. Support education and outreach efforts to ensure consumers are aware of their health coverage options, including through in-person assistance;
4. Support a health care system that provides comprehensive coverage for children;
5. Oppose any and all legislative and administrative efforts that would undermine the quality, affordability, or accessibility of health care and coverage for families;
6. Protect and improve the Medicare program, including efforts to improve quality and prevent costs from being shifted onto seniors and other vulnerable populations;
7. Protect and improve the Medicaid program, including efforts to ensure the most vulnerable populations have access to the high-quality health care they need;
8. Support extension of funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), community health centers, teaching health centers, and other critical programs whose funding expired on September 30, 2017;
9. Support state efforts to design innovative health care programs that do not compromise consumers' access to health care, including access to affordable and comprehensive health coverage;
10. Support a woman's right to constitutionally-protected reproductive health choices;
11. Support access to all approved methods of contraception at no out-of-pocket cost;
12. Support a health care system that treats women and men equally;
13. Support a robust family planning safety net that allows all qualified providers to participate;

14. Ensure women and their families covered by Medicaid have access to the qualified provider of their choice, including Planned Parenthood;
15. Support critical human services funding including employment and income support programs aimed at reducing poverty and helping recipients find work;
16. Support evidence-based programs that prevent teen pregnancy;
17. Support a health care system that expands access for those with mental health conditions and substance use disorders;
18. Support mental health parity;
19. Support deployment of HHS resources to effectively respond to the opioid crisis;
20. Strongly advocate that science, not ideology, should dictate policy;
21. Support efforts to invest in prevention, including the Prevention and Public Health Fund;
22. Support investments in public health preparedness and response efforts, including deployment of HHS resources to respond to natural disasters;
23. Support and advocate for global public health efforts, including positioning the United States as a partner in global health security work;
24. Advocate for increasing vaccination and immunization rates and defend the science supporting vaccine safety;
25. Advocate for measures to prevent and treat chronic disease;
26. Support investments in prevention and treatment efforts to reduce the occurrence and severity of infectious diseases;
27. Advocate for critical investments in research and scientific discovery to improve health;
28. Support the regulation of tobacco and e-cigarettes in a manner that is protective of the public health, particularly youth;
29. Support nutrition policies critical to promoting health, including providing consumers with comprehensive and science-based nutrition information so they can make informed decisions;
30. Support food safety regulations and public health efforts to ensure consumers are eating safe, uncontaminated food;
31. Take steps to combat anti-microbial resistance;
32. Support efforts to reduce the public health impact of injuries, including those resulting from violence;
33. Acknowledge the impact of the environment on human health and take strides to promote environmental health;
34. Support strong safety and efficacy standards for drugs and devices;
35. Support efforts to reduce the cost of prescription drugs;
36. Support equal treatment of LGBTQ individuals;
37. Advocate for services and supports that enable people with disabilities and older adults to live and work in the community and increase their participation in all aspects of life;
38. Support investments in addressing significant disparities that persist in key health indicators in certain populations, including the promotion of culturally and linguistically competent care, research strategies, and health programs;
39. Support investment in health services research to improve the quality and efficient delivery of care;
40. Oppose efforts to use the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation to increase costs to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries;

41. Support efforts to improve access to high-quality preschool programs for low- and moderate-income children
42. Support investments in and efforts to improve access to and the quality of child care for working families;
43. Support continued efforts to strengthen and expand access to Head Start programs;
44. Support investments in child welfare services and efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect;
45. Support investments in the foster care system to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and youth, particularly given the recent increases in the foster care population;
46. Support innovations in the child support system, especially those that encourage parents' involvement in their children's lives;
47. Support the use of evidence-based policymaking as well as efforts to improve privacy and data security with respect to any administrative data collected by the Department;
48. Not support, advocate for, or have donated to organizations or candidates with hateful views, including racist, homophobic, xenophobic, or sexist views, among others;
49. Be a careful steward of taxpayer dollars, including adhering to federal travel regulations, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and any other documents that dictate how and when the Secretary can expend funds for his or her own needs;
50. Be unencumbered by conflicts of interest, including investments in companies or sectors overseen by the Department; and
51. Have acted in a legal and ethical manner with regard to any previous investments.

Thank you for your attention to these requirements. The individual charged with overseeing the nation's health must be held to the highest possible standard, and we will work to ensure that is the case for any nominee you may choose.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions Committee



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee