



April 27, 2020

Re: Medicare Crisis Program Act – Support

Dear Congresswoman Jayapal and Congressman Kennedy:

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) is honored to support the Medicare Crisis Program Act. CARA is California's largest grassroots senior advocacy organization, representing over 1,000,000 seniors and their families through our 270 affiliated organizations. CARA believes that Health Care is a Human Right and support expanding Medicare to all Americans.

We are pleased to see that the bill includes provisions that requires private insurers (particularly Medicare Advantage plans) to cover COVID-19 testing without prior authorization and no cost-sharing. As seniors are the most vulnerable population to catch COVID-19, access to testing is critical for the CARA membership.

While the majority of the CARA membership receives insurance through Medicare, our children and grandchildren are losing access to employer-based insurance: Shortly after a lay-off notice is issued they are issued a bill to purchase COBRA coverage, which is too expensive and not does NOT provided adequate coverage. We strongly support the provision that any person in a household that is eligible for unemployment insurance due to COVID-19 qualifies for the Medicare Crisis Program.

CARA strongly supports the provision of the bill that provides for the necessary personal protective equipment needed for our health care providers. These are our frontline workforce that are putting their lives on the line for patients. We can, and must, support our healthcare providers. Getting adequate PPE equipment will keep them safe to do their jobs.

While this bill falls short of CARA's call for expanding Medicare to All, it would provide immediate relief to all Americans who suddenly find themselves unemployed and without health insurance, provide for the necessary testing to ensure the safety of all Americans, and help our health care providers get the protective equipment they need to care for patients.

We look forward to working with you on advancing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hene Kelly".

Hene Kelly
Legislative Director
415-533-5244