February 22, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Senators Wyden and Crapo:

As advocacy organizations committed to advancing health equity, we submit the following letter in support of the nomination of Attorney General Xavier Becerra for Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Attorney General Becerra is a demonstrated leader in the fight for quality, affordable health care, immigrant rights and the principles of equity and justice upon which our health system must be based. As a member of Congress from 1993-2017, Attorney General Becerra fought tirelessly to protect and expand access to affordable health care for all people, which included his leadership in the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Since then, as California’s Attorney General, he has continued his tireless work to protect people’s health, most notably as the lead defender of the ACA in the California v. Texas lawsuit, currently before the Supreme Court. He is also a longstanding champion for protecting and expanding access to sexual and reproductive health, including abortion, which is critical for advancing health equity.

Now, more than ever, we need a proven champion of health equity leading HHS. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the deep inequities that leave many Black and brown people without resources or recourse to protect their families. In particular, the pandemic has had a disproportionate and devastating impact on Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American, and Pacific Islander communities, who face alarming rates of infection and death due to discriminatory barriers to safe work places, health coverage, and care. It has also exposed how our health system fails LGBTQ+ people, immigrants, people with disabilities, older adults, and every intersection thereof. We are confident that as HHS Secretary, Attorney General Becerra will take quick and decisive action to mitigate the harm the pandemic has caused as well to address the underlying inequities that keep our systems from serving the public fairly and well.

We further expect Attorney General Becerra to continue his commitment to working with advocates, policy makers, and agency staff to build on the important foundation the ACA has laid, including in the areas of expanded coverage, increased affordability, and improved access to quality care for all people. His leadership and expertise will also be particularly valuable in developing and implementing a plan to reverse anti-immigrant policies, including public charge
rules and non-discrimination protections for people with limited English proficiency, and to rebuilding trust between our government and immigrant communities going forward.

Attorney General Becerra is the right leader for the moment. We enthusiastically support his nomination and look forward to working with him to move our nation’s health system forward with health equity and the needs of historically excluded and under-resourced communities at the center.

Thank you,

National
Community Catalyst

State
California
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
Health Access California
Colorado
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
Florida
Florida Policy Institute
Florida Health Justice Project
Georgia
The Arc Georgia
Georgians for a Healthy Future
Illinois
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
EverThrive Illinois
Indiana
Hoosier Action
Kentucky
Kentucky Voices for Health
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Massachusetts
Health Care for All Massachusetts
Advocates
Maryland
Maryland Citizens’ Health Initiative
Maine
Consumers for Affordable Health Care
Maine Equal Justice
Michigan
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)

Minnesota
TakeAction Minnesota

Mississippi
Mississippi Center for Justice

Missouri
Missouri Health Care For All

North Carolina
NC Justice Center
North Carolina AIDS Action Network

New Jersey
New Jersey Citizen Action
Salvation and Social Justice

Nevada
Children’s Advocacy Alliance

New York
Progressive Doctors
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Make the Road New York

Ohio
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio

Oklahoma
Oklahoma Policy Institute

Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Health Access Network
CASA

Rhode Island
Economic Progress Institute

South Carolina
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center

Tennessee
Tennessee Justice Center
Tennessee Disability Coalition
Tennessee Health Care Campaign

Utah
Utah Health Policy Project

Virginia
Virginia Organizing
Virginia Poverty Law Center

Washington
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Wisconsin
Citizen Action of Wisconsin
Kids Forward
West Virginia
West Virginians for Affordable Health Care
WV FREE