



November 17, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy and Leader McConnell:

Trinity Health—a faith-based health system committed to being a transforming healing presence within the communities we serve—appreciates the actions this Congress has taken to improve the health of Americans. As you prioritize year-end Congressional action, we strongly encourage you to advance the policies below as they are critical to the continuation of our mission-driven work.

#### **Provide Fair Payment to Hospitals and Health Systems**

The clinical staffing crisis, skyrocketing supply costs, and ongoing COVID-19 financial pressures have crippled not-for-profit hospitals and health systems. Unlike other industries, we are not able to pass increased costs onto customers. Instead, we must rely on governmental entities and commercial health plans to adjust rates. This October [report](#) from the health care consulting firm Kaufman Hall found that 2022 is expected to be one of the most financially difficult years for hospitals. Without fair payment and a sufficient workforce, patients will experience even longer delays for care, critical service line reductions and closures, and delays with efforts to connect clinical and social care, and hospitals will continue to warn we are not prepared for the next public health emergency. Trinity Health urges Congress to:

- **Prevent the 4% PAYGO cuts** from taking effect.
- **Cancel scheduled Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) decrease in the Medicare conversion factor** that would reduce physician payment by more than 4% as proposed in H.R. 8800.
- Establish a **temporary per diem payment** targeted to hospitals to address the patient discharge backlog hospitals are experiencing due to staffing challenges at post-acute facilities or insurer prior authorization.

#### **Invest in Public Health**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weaknesses in our nation's public health infrastructure due to underfunding and lack of prioritization. Health systems need resources to continue to deliver public health services. This includes addressing workforce shortages and colleague burnout. We ask Congress to support policies that:

- Modernize the nation's public health system by **passing the PREVENT Pandemics Act**.
- Protect health care workers from assault and intimidation through **enacting the Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act**.
- Learn from the experience of nurse staffing agency rates during the pandemic and how these practices contribute to health care workforce shortages **by passing the Travel Nursing Agency Transparency Study Act**.

### Improve Community Health

Improving the health of individuals and communities is at the core of Trinity Health's Mission. Health disparities have been magnified by COVID-19 and we must do a better job of integrating clinical and social care to confront them. We encourage Congress to address social influencers of health through policies to:

- Expand access to affordable housing by **supporting the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act**.
- Address disparities in maternal health outcomes by **establishing 12-month Medicaid postpartum coverage** as a required federal benefit.

### Ensure Affordable, High-Value Health Care

Value-based care incentivizes innovation and can lower rising health care costs by linking payment to quality and outcomes instead of volume. Current models lack sustainability and incentives to build upon successes, and commercial insurers have been slow to shift to payment models that reward providers fairly for delivering on value-based care. Trinity Health is doing its part to deliver value to our communities through high-quality care at affordable costs. It is critical that Congress:

- Address barriers to fair payment to providers by passing the **Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act**.
- Maintain the momentum for value-based care and **extend the 5% bonus incentive payment for Accountable Care Organizations** by passing the Value in Health Care Act.
- **Expand access to Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)** through support for the PACE Part D Choice Act and the Elizabeth Dole VA Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act.
- Ensure the sustainability of home health care by **passing the Choose Home Care Act and the Preserving Access to Home Health Act**.

### Expand Access to Care

Trinity Health is committed to ensuring access to affordable health care for all. The pandemic has increased the need for behavioral health services and delayed access to other health care services. At the same time, telehealth has proved to be an important tool to expand access to care. Congress should:

- **Pass a two-year extension of important telehealth policies** enacted at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reauthorize programs to address the mental health and substance use crisis by **passing the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act**.

Trinity Health urges Congress to address these issues prior to the end of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. Together, we can improve the health of the communities we serve. Please contact me or Maggie Randolph, Director of Public Policy & Analysis, at [margaret.randolph@trinity-health.org](mailto:margaret.randolph@trinity-health.org) with questions.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Slubowski, FACHE, FACMPE  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Trinity Health