

## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: All Clients

FROM: Center Road Solutions

DATE: May 13, 2020

### **RE: House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Hearing on “the Fiscal Year 2022 HHS Budget”**

On May 12, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a hearing titled “[the Fiscal Year 2022 HHS Budget](#).” The only witness was the Honorable Xavier Becerra, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

#### **Opening Statements:**

##### **Subcommittee Chairwoman Anna Eshoo (D-CA-18)**

- Biden’s proposed budget has the largest CDC budget increase in 20 years and provides \$1.6 billion for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant, more than doubling our nations mental health funding.

##### **Subcommittee Ranking Member Brett Guthrie (R-KY-02)**

- This budget is about an 8% increase over the FY21 budget. The budget increases the size of HHS by almost a quarter.

##### **Committee Chairwoman Frank Pallone (D-NJ-06)**

- This budget proposal is an excellent investment in our nation’s public health system.
- This budget would do many important things including reducing maternal mortality and improving mental health.

##### **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra**

- Now more than ever we have to make sure HHS has the money it needs to protect our communities’ health. This budget is targeted and forward-thinking to meet department goals.

#### **Question and Answer:**

##### **Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA-06)**

- Question: How will your department prioritize the mental and behavioral health needs of children and young people?
- Answer: We want to do everything we can to help children with the stress they are facing.
- Question: Do you believe that there are some telehealth regulatory restrictions that Congress and HHS can work together on in the short term that will not require additional data?
- Answer: We learned a lot through COVID about telehealth and there are some things we can do without Congress, and we are doing those things. But there is still a big mountain to climb regarding broadband access.

##### **Representative Kathy Castor (D-FL-14)**

- Question: Florida has led in the number of sign-ups in the healthcare.gov marketplace. Florida had 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the 1 million sign-ups during the special enrollment period. HHS was supposed to review regulations and policies that undermine the ACA, have you done that, particularly regarding junk plans?
- Answer: We are undertaking that review as we speak.

##### **Representative John Sarbanes (D-MD-03)**

- Question: School-based health centers provide a wide range of health services, including mental health care. It is important that these facilities stay open as students return to school. Can you speak to what investments will be made in school-based health centers in the 2022 budget?
- Answer: HHS will do everything it can to make school-based health centers successful. We don't tell the states what to do within their schools, but we will be as supportive as possible and make sure students have what they need to succeed.

### **Representative Ann Kuster (D-NH-02)**

- Question: The HHS budget including \$10 billion for the opioid epidemic. How will it be used?
- Answer: SAMHSA will be taking the lead and HHS will be working with state partners. We're going to try to be innovative and ensure that Americans, especially young people, know that we want to catch them before they fall completely.
- Question: Only half of all substance use disorder patients have access to evidence-based treatment. How will you improve access to evidence-based treatment, especially in rural communities?
- Answer: We will be working with state and local partners because they're the ones implementing it. As the AG of California, we worked to get settlements with drug companies to make sure we were getting money into the community. If we're smart, we're going to make sure that the settlement money and American Rescue Plan money work together to have a huge impact.

### **Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL-02)**

- Question How could the maternal health investments the administration has requested improve maternal health care and narrow the persistent inequities we see in maternal health outcomes?
- Answer: I'm glad you asked, this is a crisis and we're going to tackle it. We're going to use an evidence-based approach. We're going to go where we know the crisis is. We're going to use procedures that we know work. Part of this is making sure women have access to the information and services they need during the pregnancy to make sure there isn't crisis at delivery. It will be \$200 million well spent.
- Question: Are there any other policies you would like the committee to consider?
- Answer: Medicaid has been important for so many of these women. We support Medicaid expansions in states that haven't done it yet. We have put out a challenge to states that want to extend care from 60 days to up to a year post-partum, we're with them and we'll provide them with some additional support.

### **Representative John Curtis (R-UT-03)**

- Question: What specific plans do you have for HHS regarding making telehealth expansions permanent, especially for seniors?
- Answer: We've learned a lot from COVID on how to do this. We want to offer flexibility but make sure we don't leave anyone out. This includes broadband access. We want to make sure the inequities that we saw during COVID don't come about in telehealth as well.

### **Representative Angie Craig (D-MN-02)**

- Question: Do have any comments on the idea of reinsurance programs or extended financial assistance to people on the individual market? Does HHS support providing states with assistance to set up such reinsurance markets?
- Answer: I certainly agree that we need to have a stable market and reinsurance is one of the ways that we can do that.
- Question: The American Rescue Plan included health insurance premium assistance for many Americans and extended subsidies to more Americans, including individuals with income up to 400% of the federal poverty line. Could you speak about the impact of these changes?
- Answer: There are 1,000,000 new enrollees in the ACA because of the special enrollment period and the savings you made possible. The American Families Plan would make these savings permanent and lead us to an America where health care is a right not just a privilege.