



The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries:

As patient advocates for health-care price transparency and its profound potential to lower the costs of care and coverage for all Americans, we stand in strong support of the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act (H.R. 5378). On behalf of patients, employers, and unions, we thank you for championing this important bill.

Because of your bipartisan leadership, Americans may very soon, with the passage of this bill, find protection from the price gouging, billing fraud, surprise charges and wide price variation that is rampant in our nation's health-care system. By assuring consumers access to true upfront prices, not estimates, the bill will empower patients to shop for the most affordable care with price certainty.

Although the Hospital Price Transparency and the Transparency in Coverage rules were well-intentioned first steps to address these issues, nearly three years later, we have seen their weaknesses. These rules need fortification and stronger enforcement. Thus, we are heartened to see that H.R. 5378 offers a critical next step by codifying the existing transparency rules and strengthening them in several important ways, including by eliminating the estimator tool. The option to offer an estimate instead of access to all prices defeats the purpose of true health-care price transparency. Estimator tools offer patients one price that is non-binding and with no context for comparison, while providing hospitals yet another way to avoid showing real prices.

We are also heartened to see that this bill will usher in significantly higher monetary penalties for hospitals that don't comply with the law, and will introduce site-neutral payment provisions, which the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission has long been telling Congress is necessary to lower health-care costs and slow the rampant consolidation that fuels runaway prices. For these reasons and more, we stand with you in support of the Lower Cost, Higher Transparency Act, which will help lead the way to a competitive functional health-care market, where consumers know the price before they purchase, the way they do in every other industry.

With this bill in effect, we will offer relief to the more than 100 million Americans who are burdened by medical debt. We will see employers finally have access to their claims data and see how their premium dollars are being spent so they can choose more affordable health plans. Once they do, they can apply the savings toward higher wages and more jobs. We will see inflation go down as Americans find their dollars are going further because fewer dollars are going toward health care. We will see more Americans stop putting off the care they need, and start living longer, healthier lives.

All this is in our reach thanks to your leadership, and the promise of H.R. 5378. In the days ahead, we encourage you to continue to stand strong in the face of the special interests working to undermine this bill for the sake of their own profits. We will continue to work alongside you and other Congress Members and we won't stop until the right to know health-care prices up front becomes a reality for every American.

Sincerely,

Marni J. Carey

Marni Jameson Carey
President, Power to the Patients

www.powertothepatients.org