



February 25, 2022

**The Honorable Ron Wyden**

Chairman  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Richard Neal**

Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**The Honorable Mike Crapo**

Ranking Member  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Kevin Brady**

Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Crapo, Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady:

On behalf of organizations representing millions of U.S. Hispanics and Latinos across the country who have greatly benefitted from telehealth, we write to urge you to enact legislation that permanently removes the Section 1834(m) geographic and originating site telehealth restrictions to ensure that Medicare recipients can access virtual care in the location and setting of their choice. We also encourage you to permanently allow individuals with high-deductible health plans to receive telehealth coverage on a pre-deductible basis.

As you may know, in March 2020, lawmakers temporarily suspended numerous burdensome regulations to help millions of Americans to receive life-saving care and socially distance during the pandemic. These changes authorized physicians and other providers to deliver telehealth to Medicare beneficiaries in any area of the country. They also allowed Medicare recipients to receive virtual care in the comfort of their homes. In addition, they empowered health insurers to cover telehealth services before individuals met their deductible.

Thanks to Congress' efforts to combat the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), millions of Latinos can conveniently access telehealth services from the health care professionals they trust. From June 2019 to June 2020, the number of [Medicare enrollees who engaged in telehealth](#) jumped from just 134,000 to more than 10 million — a 7,400 percent increase.

Congress' telehealth expansions significantly enhanced the affordability of health care. By allowing individuals to conveniently consult their provider over their phone and computer, telehealth helped patients avoid expensive office and emergency room visits. As a result, individuals who use telehealth saw their monthly health expenses fall 61 percent during the pandemic, according to a [study](#) co-authored by Americans for Prosperity and the Progressive Policy Institute.

Unfortunately, these important reforms are limited to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Unless Congress takes bold and decisive action, millions of Americans – including many Latinos – may lose critical access to health services as soon as federal officials declare the COVID-19 crisis over.

It is critically important that Congress ensures Latino families can continue to access important virtual services on a long-term basis. An [Urban Institute](#) report found Hispanic adults were significantly more likely to use telehealth for their health needs than white adults during the pandemic. Another study by [Anthem](#) found Latinos used telehealth for mental health conditions at higher rates than other Americans.

If this global pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we should be removing unnecessary barriers that are getting in the way of patients accessing life-saving health care. By empowering families on Medicare and high-deductible health plans to access telehealth on a long-term basis, Congress can provide certainty to millions of Americans who are relying on this important tool.

Finally, as Latino organizations that care deeply about our country's growing and thriving Latino community, we believe that it is imperative that we impress upon our community the need for increased preventive health care. [Studies](#) show that Latinos put off going to the doctor for regular check-ups and often resort to the emergency rooms first when sick. By expanding telehealth, we are hopeful that more and more Latinos will seek out preventive health care services.

We urge you to take swift action to ensure that these life-saving options for millions of Americans don't expire.

Thank you in advance for your every consideration.

**Daniel Garza**  
President  
The LIBRE Initiative

**CiCi Rojas**  
President  
The Latino Coalition

**Cesar Ybarra**  
Vice President of Legislative Affairs  
Hispanic Grassroots Alliance

**Mario H. Lopez**  
President  
Hispanic Leadership Fund

**Alfonso Aguilar**  
President  
Latino Partnership for  
Conservative Principles

CC: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy