

Puerto Rico Healthcare Community

October 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate

RE: Puerto Rico Healthcare Community Support to H.R. 6809 (PRIMA Act)

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

As advocates representing the Puerto Rico healthcare community, we thank you for the hurricane relief efforts undertaken by Congress in the year since our island was devastated by Hurricanes Irma and María. As we continue with our recovery, we call on you to take the next step and eliminate Medicare payment disparities impacting care received by beneficiaries in Puerto Rico.

Medicare is a cornerstone healthcare program for patients and providers in Puerto Rico. 580,000 seniors in Puerto Rico are covered by Medicare Advantage (MA), the 8th largest MA population in the U.S., including 280,000 dually-eligible seniors for whom Medicare funding is essential in light of Medicaid limitations. Unfortunately, MA rates in Puerto Rico have fallen for 7 years to a level that is now 43% below the national average. When diminishing funding flows to Puerto Rico, less resources and support pass through to patients and providers. Adding an economic crisis and the catastrophic devastation of Hurricane María has resulted in a healthcare system with sub-standard infrastructure and provider migration to the mainland.

We endorse H.R. 6809, the Puerto Rico Integrity in Medicare Advantage (PRIMA) Act of 2018, introduced by Congresswoman Jenniffer González Colón. Unfortunately, the actions implemented by CMS so far have not eliminated disparity in the MA payment rate level for beneficiaries residing on the island. The PRIMA Act can help us rebuild the healthcare system, eliminate Medicare payment disparities between Puerto Rico and the rest of the U.S., as well as ensure that increased resources flow to patients and providers.

Passing PRIMA now will (1) immediately enhance the quality of care for the most vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries, (2) motivate residents and key healthcare providers in the island to forgo additional migration to the mainland, and (3) encourage future investment in Puerto Rico's healthcare system infrastructure; all of which are needed after the tragedy caused by Hurricanes Irma and María.

Sincerely,

Advocates of the Puerto Rico Healthcare Community





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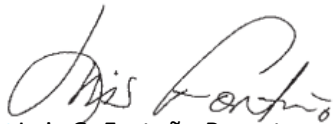
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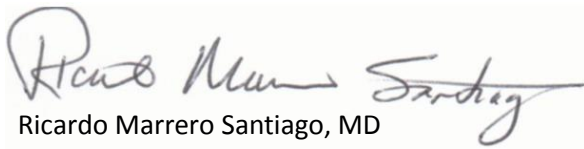
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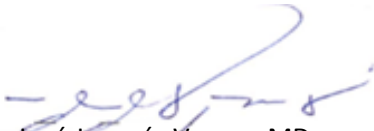
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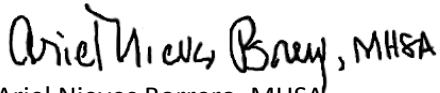
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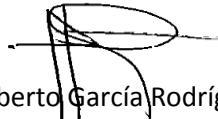
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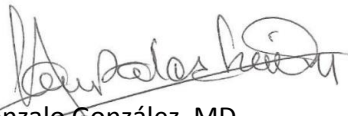
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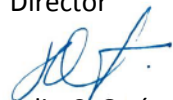
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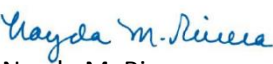
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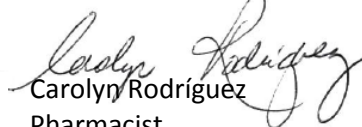
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