



PRESS RELEASE

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Republicans, Democrats, and Independents Agree: Puerto Ricans Deserve Equitable Access to Federal Healthcare Programs

September 12, 2016. San Juan, Puerto Rico. According to a poll released this week by Morning Consult, no less than 74% of registered voters in the United States agree that Puerto Ricans, as U.S. citizens, deserve equitable access to federal healthcare benefits, which is a clear signal that Americans recognize the unfair treatment of Puerto Rico's Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and the need for reforms. The results of the poll are here: <http://www.mmapapr.org/press-releases---news.html>.

Jim O'Drobinak, President of the Medicaid and Medicare Advantage Products Association of Puerto Rico (MMAPA) and CEO for MCS, believes that the poll confirms what the Puerto Rico health care community has been saying for some time. "The poll represents a clear recognition that the people of Puerto Rico have the same right to quality health care that other Americans enjoy. Now it's time for Congress to roll up its sleeves and respond to this broad mandate for reforms." MMAPA and twelve other key organizations from the Puerto Rico healthcare community recently submitted specific policy proposals (available here: www.mmapapr.org) to the newly-created PROMESA Congressional Task Force on Economic Development in Puerto Rico (The Task Force). Establishing parity in Puerto Rico's Medicaid federal funds matching levels, establishing a defined minimum Medicare Advantage (MA) rate benchmark, ending the exclusion of the Territories from the Medicare Part-D Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) program and eliminating the application of the Health Insurance Tax (HIT) to Puerto Rico are areas that must be addressed by the Task Force in order to achieve equitable access to care in Puerto Rico and promote economic development.

"While familiar programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and certain provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) exist in Puerto Rico, they operate under different rules than those that apply to the rest of the country," explained Roberto García Rodríguez, MMAPA Board member and CEO of Triple-S Management Corp. "Those differences serve to perpetuate disparities and contribute to economic destabilization on the Island. We urge the Task Force to listen to the voters and address these systemic inequities in its report to Congress. The reforms proposed by the Puerto Rico healthcare community will bring stability and predictability to Puerto Rico's health care delivery system – and, consequently, to the Island's broader economy – at a much lower socio-economic cost to the overall U.S. economy than if Puerto Ricans continue moving to states like Florida, Texas and New York, where Medicaid, Medicare and other social benefit programs are three to five times as expensive." Garcia added.

Dr. Rick Shinto, MMAPA Board member and CEO for MMM Holdings, Inc., said that "Puerto Rico is heavily reliant on federally sponsored health care programs: at least 60 percent of the Island's population is enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid. The Island has more Medicare beneficiaries than 25 states, of whom 45 percent are low income, and has the 12th largest Medicaid program in the country. To break it down, out of the approximately 3.4 million U.S citizens residing in the Island, there are about 1.4 million Puerto Ricans enrolled in Medicaid, 570,000 in MA, and 280,000, who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The Puerto Rican health care system is in crisis. Resolving its many problems is absolutely critical to addressing the Island's overall economy."

The good news is that this poll provides proof that the American public recognizes the need for reforms to ensure equitable access to care. "Our multi-year efforts are paying off, as more people are aware of the injustice that Puerto Rico beneficiaries have to endure to obtain equal access to quality healthcare. Now, we look forward to working with the Task Force and other members of Congress to fix Puerto Rico's economic and health care crisis as soon as possible," added Earl Harper, MMAPA Board member and Market President of Humana.



MMAPA is a non-profit association composed of the leading Medicaid and Medicare Advantage organizations in Puerto Rico. Established in 2009, MMAPA is dedicated to educating policymakers about Puerto Rico's healthcare system and addressing the inequities in current law. The Association's members serve nearly one million Puerto Ricans.