



July 29, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
& Pensions  
United States Senate  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray and Chairman Pallone,

The National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) is a grassroots organization dedicated to action and advocacy. We are a coalition of many diverse groups across the country, focused on our mission to end breast cancer. Since our inception in 1991, we have been fighting for access to high-quality, evidence-based healthcare for all individuals.

NBCC's primary goals are to increase federal funding for breast cancer research and collaborate with the scientific community to implement new models of research; improve access to high-quality health care and breast cancer clinical trials for all women and men, and expand the influence of breast cancer advocates wherever breast cancer decisions are made.

Ensuring access to quality health care is an urgent and longstanding priority for NBCC and an essential component of our mission to end breast cancer. In 2010, NBCC endorsed and advocated for the passage and implementation of the ACA, which marked a significant step toward access to quality health care for individuals with, and at risk of breast cancer.

The ACA has saved the lives of those barred from coverage due to a preexisting condition or repeated bouts of cancer. We applaud your efforts to build upon the successes of the ACA to expand access to quality health care for all. NBCC stands ready to work with you on this critical issue.

### **NBCC Healthcare Framework**

In 2003, NBCC adopted its Principles for Achieving Guaranteed Access to Quality Health Care for All. NBCC analyzed various approaches to developing public policy that moves beyond incremental changes to the existing health care system toward true comprehensive reform. NBCC's extensive research and analysis gave rise to its Framework for a Health Care System Guaranteeing Access to Quality Health Care for All.

This Framework is intended primarily to address the issue of health care coverage. NBCC continues to work on approaches to quality and access beyond coverage.

A health care system that is built on the NBCC framework will:

- Provide a basic benefits package that is comprehensive and based on sound scientific evidence.

- Maintain continuity of coverage.
- Be efficient and cost-effective.
- Be fully funded through shared financial responsibility.
- Be sustainable and affordable.

The NBCC framework also recognizes that the health care system must be accountable to the users and the public. For this reason, a system must be established to:

- Evaluate and support the development of medical evidence for health interventions upon which coverage will be based.
- Support ongoing and continuous comparison of interventions to ensure access to appropriate and cost-effective health care.
- Modify and expand current benefits as appropriate based on evidence.

### NBCC Responses to the Committees' Questions

#### **Who Should be eligible for the public option?**

All individuals present in the United States should be eligible for public option coverage regardless of their immigration or residency status.

#### **How should prices for health care items and services be determined?**

Prices should be determined based on value and high-level evidence of clinical effectiveness.

The government should implement strategies to significantly reduce the current administrative costs of the health care system, and all such savings shall go toward providing coverage.

The government should also develop and implement strategies to simplify the current system, reduce duplication, inaccuracies, and inefficient record-keeping and provide for system-wide, interoperable electronic record keeping.

#### **How should the public option's benefits package be structured?**

All eligible individuals should be provided with coverage for a benefits package equivalent to the most comprehensive plan available to Members of Congress through the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan.

The benefits package must guarantee coverage for care that is based on the best available scientific evidence and is cost-effective (as determined by the Federal board described below). Care that does not meet these criteria should not be covered unless it is being provided as part of a quality clinical trial or otherwise appropriately contributing to the further development of the evidence base.

A Federal-level board should be created with authority to implement a coverage determination system based on evidence. The board should include members representing the lay public (at least 25%.) The members should have staggered terms no longer than four (4) years. Cost-effectiveness should be a factor considered by the board in making benefit coverage decisions.

A separate and independent body, including at least 25 percent membership from the lay public, should be appointed to develop a system for assessing the comparative effectiveness of interventions, the results of which must be utilized by the board determining coverage benefits.

The comprehensive benefits package and any modifications should be limited to those interventions that the boards deem to be efficacious, safe, cost-effective, based on sound evidence or either as part of a quality clinical trial or otherwise appropriately contributing to the evidence base.

Commercially available private health plans may provide coverage of benefits not included in the public option benefit package.

**What type of premium assistance should the Federal government provide for individuals enrolled in the public option?**

All individuals should be required to financially contribute to the system according to their ability to pay.

All employers should also be required to financially contribute to the system. Subsidies or a sliding scale should be implemented to ensure that small businesses are not disproportionately affected by these payments.

The federal government should establish a method for determining the financial contributions for individuals and employers.

No individual should be denied coverage because of inability to pay.

In addition to individual and employer contributions, the system should be financed by the public and private savings from efficiencies (referred to above) as well as other government funding sources.

**Conclusion**

Now more than ever, individuals must have access to affordable health care for all their medical needs. We thank you for your leadership in making this happen. Covering all individuals is good public health policy, especially as we emerge from this unprecedented public health crisis.

NBCC has long believed that everyone who needs health care must have access to quality care. We stand ready to work with you on this significant public health priority. Should you have questions or require additional information, please reach out to Melanie Wyne, NBCC Chief Policy Officer, at [mwyne@stopbreastcancer.org](mailto:mwyne@stopbreastcancer.org) or 202-973-0581.

Regards,



Fran Visco, President

cc: Senate Committee on Health, Education and Pensions  
House Energy & Commerce Committee