

December 17, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 2051

Dear Leaders McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the over 54 million Americans and 300,000 children with doctor-diagnosed arthritis in the U.S., the Arthritis Foundation applauds Congressional leadership in advancing crucial legislation on surprise medical billing and urges you to swiftly pass this legislation. Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the U.S., and people living with the disease rely on continuous access to health care to manage their disease. The Arthritis Foundation urges patient-centered reforms across the entire health care system to balance the need for patient access to therapies and lower out-of-pocket costs while instilling an innovative culture.

Patients should be held harmless from both surprise medical bills and any disputes between the provider and insurance company. Numerous studies indicate that patients are often charged tens of thousands of dollars in surprise bills through no fault of their own. These practices are detrimental to patients and are unacceptable. We often hear from patients who specifically choose their doctors and hospitals to ensure they are considered in-network, yet still encounter surprise bills. We recognize this legislation is a strong compromise after years of negotiation on surprise medical billing and has significant potential to protect patients.

Congress has an opportunity to pass a bipartisan solution to this widespread problem, and we urge you to act quickly to ban surprise medical billing and fully protect patients. Should you have any questions or would like to discuss this crucial issue further, please contact Anna Hyde, Vice President of Advocacy and Access, at ahyde@arthritis.org or 202-843-0105.

Sincerely,



Ann M. Palmer
President and CEO
Arthritis Foundation