

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

January 14, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We commend the Administration for pursuing a comprehensive strategy intended to make COVID-19 testing more widely available, including making at-home testing available to most Americans at no cost. The Administration's guidance to require commercial insurers to cover the cost of at-home tests and to also make them available free through various distribution methods is a step in the right direction, but providing limited free tests may not be sufficient for Medicare recipients. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) should likewise provide full Medicare reimbursement for at home tests.

We write today to urge you to take immediate action to ensure that those covered by Medicare have the same ready, cost free access to COVID-19 diagnostic tests. Beneficiaries should have continued access to at-home COVID-19 testing and their providers should be involved in the ordering of tests and made aware of test results.

Broad access to diagnostic testing for COVID-19 is a critical component of a comprehensive strategy to effectively identify and mitigate the spread of this virus, especially as new variants continue to emerge. Without comparable benefits available through the Medicare program nearly 20% of the population would be made to pay out-of-pocket for COVID-19 tests, and therefore should not be expected to test with the same desired frequency. Needless to say, Americans enrolled in Medicare are among the most susceptible and vulnerable to infection, and among the least able to pay for testing.

Enhanced access to at-home diagnostic tests can help us to better identify and isolate cases of COVID-19, and in turn, reduce spread and adverse outcomes from COVID-19. We urge you to close the gap that presently exists with our publicly-supported safety net health programs, and stand ready to work with you to ensure that all Medicare beneficiaries have the same access to these life-saving diagnostics tools.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Scott Peters  
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable Xavier Beccera, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services  
The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid  
Services