

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2023

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

We commend the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for taking the important step of covering at-home COVID-19 diagnostic test at no-cost to beneficiaries through a demonstration program. In doing so, CMS has helped ensure Medicare beneficiaries have access to the same benefits as those with private insurance. The at-home COVID-19 diagnostic testing program has improved the health and wellbeing of Medicare beneficiaries around the country. As CMS determines which programs created during the public health emergency (PHE) should be maintained, we hope CMS will consider continuing this valuable demonstration program beyond the PHE.

We appreciate that CMS's hard work has protected the lives of countless older and disabled adults. Given that the PHE is currently poised to end in the coming months we find ourselves at an important inflection point. Seniors will continue to live with the real threat of COVID-19, without many of the COVID-19 era PHE protections.

At-home diagnostic tests play an important role in helping identify and isolate cases of COVID-19. These tests help prevent further spread by allowing individuals to test themselves when they first present symptoms or are alerted to a possible exposure. These tests have important implications for public health, as millions of Americans now routinely test themselves before going into crowded social settings or seeing a relative who is particularly at-risk for severe disease. Easy access to testing with quick results has undoubtedly prevented the spread of COVID-19 and enable Americans to resume normal life.


Ending Medicare coverage for at-home COVID-19 tests could undo much of this progress and make it harder for Medicare beneficiaries to obtain accurate and timely information about their health. For example, without coverage under Medicare, many older Americans will not be able to afford to pay out-of-pocket for these critical tests.


We understand that CMS's demonstration program to cover at-home tests is slated to end along with the PHE. Yet, the need for readily accessible, at-home COVID-19 tests will not go away when the PHE ends. As new strains continue to emerge, we must ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have access to the diagnostic tools they've come to rely on.


We write to ask CMS to provide our offices with additional information on its authority and plans to potentially extend this demonstration program beyond the PHE.


Thank you again for your work to improve the lives of older Americans across this country. We look forward to continuing to work together to alleviate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and provide Medicare beneficiaries with what they need to stay healthy.


Sincerely,


Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress


Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress


Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Member of Congress

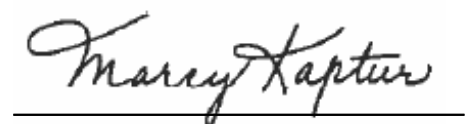

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

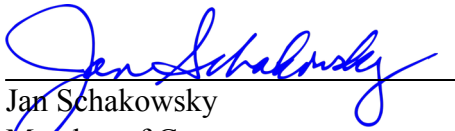

Sherita Jackson Lee
Member of Congress


David J. Trone
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress


Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



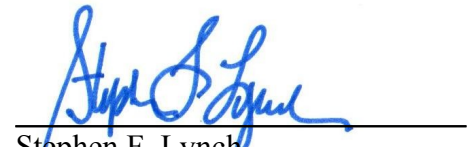
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress




Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress




Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



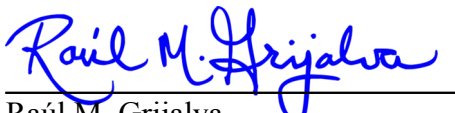
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



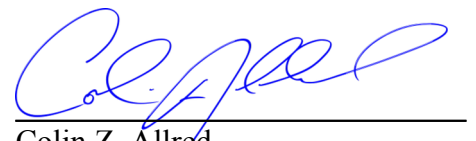
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



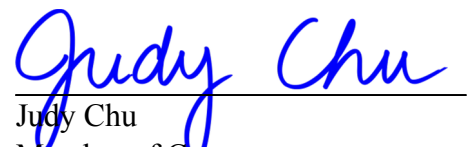
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



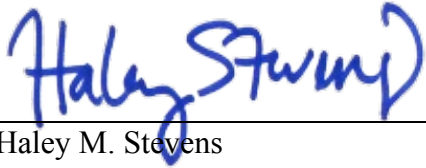
Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



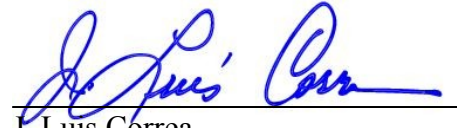
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



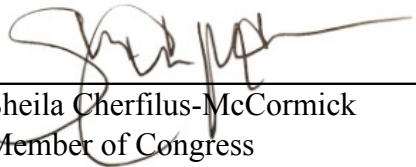
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



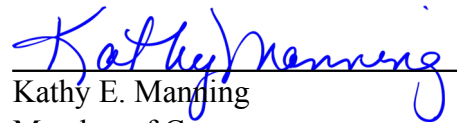
Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Kathy E. Manning
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Troy Carter
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darren Soto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being larger and more prominent than the last name.

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Goldman". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name being larger and more prominent than the last name.

Dan Goldman
Member of Congress