



June 16, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

CHRISTUS Health, a non-profit, faith-based Catholic health system, supports the immediate passage of The Creating High-Quality Results and Outcomes Necessary to Improve Chronic (CHRONIC) Care Act of 2017 (S. 870), which was reported out by the Senate Finance Committee on May 18, 2017. This legislation takes crucial steps to remove barriers to the use of telehealth and move the country toward a more efficient and effective health care system. We applaud the Senate Finance Committee for acting on a bipartisan basis to pave the way for future innovations through passage of the CHRONIC Care Act, and CHRISTUS Health respectfully urges the Senate to consider the legislation expeditiously.

More than 133 million Americans suffer from chronic conditions such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and mental illness. This population is expected to increase to approximately 171 million by 2030. A strong and growing body of evidence has clearly demonstrated that the wide array of connected health technologies available today improves patient care, reduces hospitalizations, helps avoid complications, and improves patient engagement, particularly for the chronically ill. Further, the integration of these connected health technologies has been proven to reduce health care costs significantly.

These tools – including remote patient monitoring, mobile medical device data systems, and cloud-based patient portals – enable patient-generated health data to be included in the continuum of care. The health care system must integrate and embrace these innovative technologies to improve patient care and lower costs.

Despite the proven benefits of connected health technologies, outdated government policies have largely ignored such solutions. The CHRONIC Care Act would leverage connected health technologies to better serve the unique needs of vulnerable beneficiaries by targeting traditional fee-for-service, Medicare Advantage, and Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). CHRISTUS Health supports these provisions and looks forward to the opportunities that these new policies will provide for the patient's we serve.

We also request that you consider further opportunities to improve the lives of countless Americans with chronic conditions. **Specifically, we ask that you consider modifying Section**



304 of the legislation to include Medicare Track 1 ACOs. Section 304 expands the ability of certain ACOs to furnish and receive payment for telehealth services, but the provision as currently written would apply only to two-sided risk models. Adding Track 1 ACOs to the provision would allow more beneficiaries to access vital telehealth services.

CHRISTUS Health is deeply committed to providing quality care for individuals with chronic illnesses in all of the communities we serve. We would welcome the opportunity to work with Senate Leaders on a bipartisan basis to secure enactment of the CHRONIC Care Act this year. Thank you for your consideration of our views, and please do not hesitate to contact either of us if we can provide any additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Conklin".

George S. Conklin
CHRISTUS Health
SVP and CIO

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Gillean MD".

John A. Gillean
CHRISTUS Health
EVP and CCO

cc: Members of the Senate Finance Committee