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April 15, 2021

The Honorable Rob Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education
Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Crapo, Chair Murray,
and Ranking Member Burr,

On behalf of the National Health Law Program, we write to urge you to support Chiquita Brooks-LaSure's confirmation as the next Administrator of the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). As a long-time thought leader and expert on access to health care for low-income people, particularly those most underserved by our health care system, Brooks-LaSure has the expertise, experience, and dedication to advancing access to quality health care and health equity needed to guide CMS.

CMS provides vital health coverage to more than 100 million people through Medicaid, CHIP, Medicare, and the health insurance marketplaces. With over two decades of Medicaid and health care reform leadership and expertise under her belt, as well as a demonstrated commitment to advancing health equity, Brooks-LaSure is an exceptional candidate to lead CMS.

Before her most recent work as a Managing Director at Manatt, Brooks-LaSure served in key leadership roles advancing implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) within the Obama Administration. She served as Director of Coverage Policy in the White House Office of Health Care Reform, and later as Deputy Director for Policy at CMS' Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight. Before that, she served as staff on the House Ways and Means Committee, where she contributed to the ACA's passage.

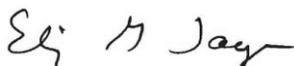
Throughout her career, Brooks-LaSure has emphasized Medicaid and the ACA marketplaces' crucial roles in alleviating racial inequities in health outcomes. She has called out the role of the Trump administration's Medicaid work requirements and 2019 public charge rule in perpetuating health inequities, particularly for people of color. She has highlighted the importance of more robust data collection to better serve underserved populations and alleviate health inequities. Brooks-LaSure has stressed the importance of centering community voices in health policy development and priority-setting—an approach that is essential to fostering a healthier and more equitable country for all.

Brooks-LaSure has paid particular attention to our country's unconscionable Black maternal health crisis. She has underscored the importance of extending Medicaid and CHIP to 12 months postpartum—a reform now possible through the American Rescue Plan Act's new state plan amendment options. She has addressed the importance of efforts to expand access to doula care. Her testimony at a 2019 House Ways and Means Hearing on pathways to universal health coverage specifically highlighted racial injustices in maternal mortality.

The challenges facing this nation are multifold, both acute and long-simmering. The pandemic has exposed flagrant flaws in our health care system and painfully revealed the United States' entrenched health inequities. There is much to be done and undone to build a more robust and equitable health care system. Our country desperately needs a CMS administrator who will center urgent health equity challenges and prioritize equitable solutions. We look forward to working with Brooks LaSure and the team at CMS to advance those solutions. We urge the Senate to confirm her nomination swiftly and resolutely.

If you have any questions, please contact Madeline Morcelle at morcelle@healthlaw.org.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Taylor
Executive Director



Mara Youdelman
Managing Attorney, Washington, DC Office

