

# **ALS Association Presses Congress to Expand Access to Health Care as Part of COVID-19 Response**

The ALS Association joined with 32 consumer and patient advocacy organizations in calling on Congress to enact legislation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that protects and expands access to quality, affordable health insurance.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made abundantly clear that all people need access to adequate and affordable health insurance coverage now more than ever. Research has demonstrated that access to comprehensive health insurance means access to timely, medically necessary health care. If someone without health insurance today contracts the COVID-19 virus, they may be forced to make the difficult decision to not be tested and treated due to fears about the cost of care. That puts our entire society – particularly the people we represent – at risk,” the organizations stated in a letter sent to Congressional leaders.

The organizations, which collectively represent 120 million Americans with pre-existing conditions, called on Congress to

- Require the Administration to re-open enrollment in the ACA marketplaces for 60 days so that patients can access high quality insurance coverage.
- Provide additional funding for state Medicaid programs, maintain the maintenance of effort provisions included in the CARES Act, and extend the length of time states can use funds.
- Enact strong risk mitigation policies to ensure premiums don't spike in the wake of the pandemic.
- Require COVID-19 testing, treatment, vaccines, and recovery services to be provided at no-cost to consumers, regardless of their method of coverage.
- Incentivize states to expand Medicaid.
- Block the implementation, enforcement, and effect of all final rules that expanded availability of non-compliant plans like short-term, limited-duration and association health plans.

- Require providers and issuers to accommodate patients who may need to change facilities or providers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and enact legislation to end all surprise bills.
- Extend eligibility and provide subsidies for individuals who have lost employer sponsored coverage.