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Mach 19, 2021

The Honorable Ann Kuster
320 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Larry Buschon
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kuster and Buschon:

On behalf of Patient Access Network (PAN) Foundation and the patients and families we support, I write to express our support for the *Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act* (H.R. 1978). PAN lauds your leadership in reintroducing this important legislation for seniors that would address a long-standing structural inequity that hinders immunization opportunities for Medicare beneficiaries.

Founded in 2004, PAN is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help underinsured people with life-threatening, chronic, and rare diseases get the medications and treatments their physicians prescribe by providing financial assistance for out-of-pocket costs and advocating for improved access and affordability. PAN provides patients with assistance through nearly 70 disease-specific programs and collaborates with national organizations to provide patients with education and support services. Since 2004, nearly one million underinsured patients have received financial assistance from the Foundation.

Older adult vaccination rates remain low. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 50,000 adults die annually from vaccine-preventable diseases. Treatment for these preventable illnesses is estimated to have cost the Medicare program \$106 billion from 2016 to 2018. Although many Part D plans cover vaccines, they usually require co-pays. The higher the co-pays, the more likely it is that patients will forgo the vaccine.

The legislation addresses the out-of-pocket payment required of Medicare beneficiaries, many of whom are on fixed incomes. Copayments apply to vaccines covered under Medicare Part D (tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) and varicella zoster (shingles)) but not vaccines under Part B (flu, pneumococcal), which are available with no cost to the beneficiary. The bill will also improve education and access to recommended vaccines for Medicare beneficiaries, with the goal of helping to increase vaccination rates.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the *Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act* becomes law. If you would like further information or have questions, please contact Amy Niles, Executive Vice President (aniles@panfoundation.org, 202/661-8073).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dan Klein".

Dan Klein, MHS
President and Chief Executive Officer