



1188 Centre Street
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March 11, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader, United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader, United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Crapo
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Finance
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Wyden, and Ranking Member Crapo:

On behalf of American healthcare consumers, PatientRightsAdvocate.org wholeheartedly supports the confirmation of Xavier Becerra as the next Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Mr. Becerra has demonstrated through his actions and words that he is a strong proponent of healthcare price transparency, which is supported by 91 percent of Americans, including 94 percent of African-Americans and 95 percent of Latinos, according to a recent [Marist poll](#). Price transparency is the first major step to allowing healthcare consumers to benefit from broad competition to reduce their healthcare and coverage costs by shopping for the best quality of care at the lowest price.

During his recent [confirmation hearings](#), Mr. Becerra spoke for all American patients when he said, "For far too long, people have had no idea what they're going to pay if they walk into a hospital." He committed to strongly supporting healthcare price transparency, saying that he will provide "robust enforcement" because "the American people are entitled to know what they're buying." He showed much-needed bipartisanship by thanking all who have worked to advance healthcare price transparency.

We look forward to HHS, under the leadership of Mr. Becerra, enforcing and expanding the [hospital price transparency rule](#) which started this year and the [Transparency In Coverage rule](#) which begins January 1, 2022.

Mr. Becerra, as Secretary of HHS, will provide strong leadership to help patients protect their wealth and their families' health. His commitment to price transparency and broad competition gives patients the power to be in control of their health decisions and have financial certainty to greatly reduce their costs. Moreover, his leadership is inclined to deliver what the American public wants from healthcare: straight-up, upfront prices that hospitals and insurers will stand by, complete medical bills that match the price, and ease of recourse to fix when they have been overcharged or erroneously or fraudulently billed.

As Attorney General of California, Mr. Becerra protected consumers from anticompetitive and price opaque practices conducted by Sutter Health, Northern California's largest hospital system. The \$575 million settlement he attained required Sutter Health to increase price transparency, restore competition, and stop price gouging, benefiting patients, healthcare consumers, and taxpayers. As head of HHS, he can take similar steps at the national scale, transforming healthcare through price and quality transparency and eliminating the overcharging, price-gouging and fraud that runs rampant in today's system.

The Affordable Care Act [requires](#) American hospitals to "establish (and update) and make public" their "standard charges for items and services provided..." Not only did Mr. Becerra play a critical role in drafting the ACA as a Member of Congress, he was also one of its strongest defenders during his tenure as California AG. By embracing and strengthening healthcare price transparency, Mr. Becerra and President Biden can put the affordable back in the Affordable Care Act, ushering in a healthcare system where patients will no longer need to fear that a routine trip to the hospital will result in ruinous healthcare bills.

Mr. Becerra's support of healthcare price transparency makes him well-qualified to lead HHS and fix American healthcare. We look forward to Mr. Becerra's leadership to ensure that the critical issue of healthcare price transparency is central to HHS. We urge the full Senate to confirm him as the next Secretary.

Sincerely,

Cynthia A. Fisher
Founder and Chairman, PatientRightsAdvocate.org