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November 22, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building, Room 445-G
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra and Administrator Brooks-LaSure,

As you are aware, on Sept. 9, 2021 President Biden declared that all companies with more than 100 employees would be required to have all employees vaccinated by January 4, 2022 or be forced to lay off unvaccinated staff or face a fine of up to \$14,000 per case¹.

Furthermore, the executive order went on to require all healthcare workers who work in facilities that accept Medicaid and Medicare to be vaccinated or face termination. This has only increased the staffing shortage facing many healthcare providers as COVID continues to strain health systems².

One population the mandate does not mention is Medicaid recipients. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation vaccination rates among Medicaid recipients are far lower than the general population with some states reporting only 26 percent of Medicaid enrollees being fully vaccinated³. Another nationwide poll found that 45 percent of individuals earning under \$50,000 said they were both unvaccinated and hesitant to get vaccinated. That number dropped to 35 percent for individuals earning \$50,000 to \$79,000 and to 26 percent for those earning more than \$80,000⁴.

¹ <https://www.businessinsider.com/biden-vaccine-rules-14000-per-employee-fines-for-breaking-2021-11>

² <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/hospitals/how-many-employees-have-hospitals-lost-to-vaccine-mandates-numbers-so-far>

³ <https://khn.org/news/article/medicaid-vaccination-rates-funder-as-states-struggle-to-immunize-their-poorest-residents/>

⁴ <https://www.rollcall.com/2021/06/30/medicaid-beneficiaries-less-likely-to-get-covid-19-shots/>

I want to make it clear; I oppose vaccine mandates of any kind. However, if the goal of the Biden Administration's mandate is to get all Americans vaccinated it seems counterproductive to exclude the population that is least likely to be vaccinated while punishing the workforce that supplies the majority of the tax revenue in this country.

There are around 60 million individuals currently receiving Medicaid benefits, many of whom have chronic conditions, which increases their risk of serious complications should they contract COVID. As the nation's leading health authorities please provide us with answers to the following questions as soon as possible.

1. Does the Biden Administration plan to mandate COVID vaccinations for Medicaid recipients?
2. Does the Biden Administration plan to take any recourse for those who refuse to get vaccinations while receiving federal benefits?
3. What is the administration doing to increase the vaccination rate among this population?
4. Will families participating in temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) and other social programs be mandated to get vaccinated?

Thank you for your prompt attention to these matters. Should you have any questions please reach out to Kirsten Wing of my staff at Kirsten.wing@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David B. McKinley". The signature is stylized, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David B. McKinley P.E.
Member of Congress