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Congress of the United States

U.S. House of Representatives

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December 17, 2019

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma:

We write regarding the troubling problems that recently have caused significant technical difficulties for consumers navigating and enrolling through the HealthCare.gov website. The final days of open enrollment are the busiest, and a significant disruption is unacceptable as it disproportionately impacts individuals seeking to enroll. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) should act swiftly to prevent consumers from being harmed as a result of these website failures and implement broader information technology improvements to avoid such problems from recurring in future years.


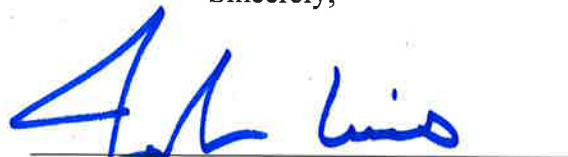

This is the second week in a row that technological failures have prompted concerns that must be addressed by senior agency leadership. On December 10, 2019, along with other House Committee leaders, this Committee urged action in response to reports that the Medicare Plan Finder was confusing, generated incorrect results, and inadvertently led beneficiaries to select plans with lower premiums but higher overall costs.¹ Over the weekend, widespread glitches affected HealthCare.gov on the last day to sign up for marketplace plans with coverage effective January 1, 2020. Based on past years, some have suggested that this could prevent roughly 100,000 people from signing up for quality affordable coverage.

¹ Letter from Chairmen Richard E. Neal, Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member Kevin Brady, and Ranking Member Greg Walden, to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma (Dec. 10, 2019).

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
The Honorable Seema Verma
December 17, 2019
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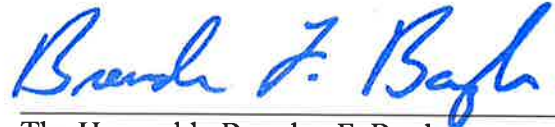
The response by agency leadership has been insufficient to date, although a short extension of the open enrollment deadline is appreciated. More than six years after HealthCare.gov opened for business, operations should be running far more smoothly. Consumers should not end up in the wrong plan or be blocked from even signing up due to mismanagement of major government websites by HHS and CMS. We will continue exercising this Committee's oversight authority going forward in order to prevent a repeat occurrence for consumers that rely on HealthCare.gov.

Sincerely,

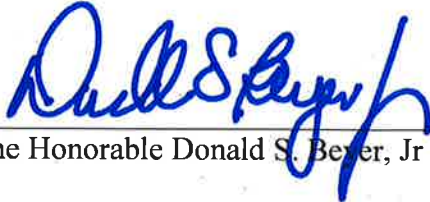

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The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
The Honorable Ron Kind
The Honorable Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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The Honorable Brian Higgins
The Honorable Terri A. Sewell



The Honorable Daniel Kildee



The Honorable Brendan F. Boyle



The Honorable Donald S. Beyer, Jr



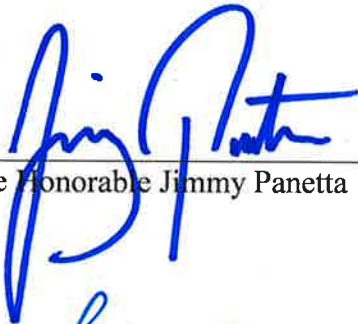
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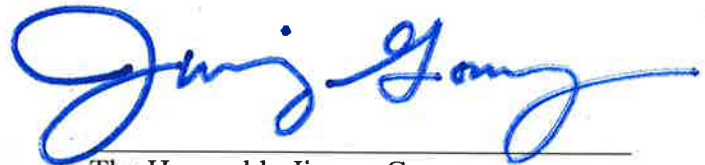
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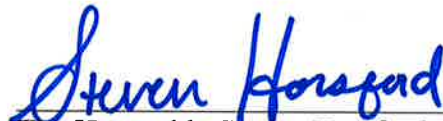
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The Honorable Jimmy Gomez



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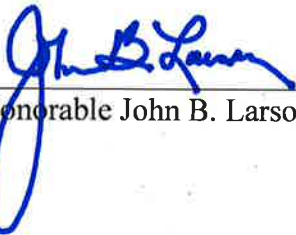
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