



November 10, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Senate Health, Education, Labor &  
Pensions Committee  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education,  
Labor & Pensions Committee  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators:

With 300,000+ HR professionals and business executives as members, SHRM (the Society for Human Resource Management) is committed to creating better workplaces and a better world through smart policy with bold purpose. Congress and federal agencies enacted telehealth and excepted benefit policies that provided workers and workplaces flexibility as they navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. A continuation of two policies enacted in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (known as the CARES Act) would provide workers increased access to care and ensure that employers are able to provide health care options valued by their workers.

Congress should extend:

- **Pre-deductible telehealth services for high-deductible health plans and health savings accounts (HDHP-HSAs)**

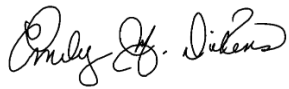
Americans with high-deductible health plans and Health Savings Accounts (HDHP-HSAs) can currently receive telehealth benefits pre-deductible. Unfortunately, this provision is set to expire on December 31. SHRM research found that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, 43 percent of organizations expanded telehealth services and 49 percent maintained telehealth benefits. Improved access to telehealth allows employees to access healthcare options at their convenience and expands the services and providers available to them. First dollar coverage is beneficial to employees because it allows a health insurance provider to cover telehealth services without a patient having to first pay their copay or deductible.

- **Access to telehealth services as an excepted benefit**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, standalone telehealth service programs could be offered to full-time employees enrolled in the employer medical plan but not to other workers. Flexibilities included in the CARES Act temporarily allow all workers, including seasonal and part-time workers, to access telehealth as an excepted benefit. A permanent solution would allow employers to expand access to telehealth as an excepted benefit beyond the current public health emergency and doing so would allow more workers to access telehealth services.

SHRM, the voice of all things work, recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic was a catalyst for many businesses to reset the workplace. SHRM encourages Congress to consider how the extension of policy changes made in response to the pandemic might benefit workers and employers moving forward. SHRM, and our members, stands ready to be a resource for Congress in this effort. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Emily M. Dickens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E" and "D".

Emily M. Dickens  
*Chief of Staff, Head of Government Affairs  
& Corporate Secretary*