



Katie Smith Sloan, Chair

January 10, 2017

Mr. Donald J. Trump
President-Elect of the United States
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear President-Elect Trump:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) congratulates you on your election to the Presidency.

Since 1980, LCAO has been the country's preeminent coalition representing older Americans. Comprised of 72 national nonprofit organization members, LCAO focuses on the well-being of America's older population and is committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena. LCAO serves as a source of information about issues affecting older persons and provides leadership and vision as America meets the challenges and opportunities presented by its aging society.

As your presidential transition team moves forward, we urge you to consider the issues and recommendations in the attached document reflecting the views of our members on health and long-term services and supports, community services, and retirement security.

While LCAO is made up of organizations that often have different perspectives on public policies, these recommendations represent the common ground among our organizations. We offer them as potential solutions to the challenges your administration will face in the coming years.

An unprecedented demographic shift is occurring as the baby boomer generation ages. Every day 10,000 people in the United States reach traditional retirement age. Compared with over 46 million seniors today, by 2030, 70 million people – 1 in 5 Americans – will be 65 or older.

Many older Americans face economic and health challenges. Currently, nearly 90 percent of seniors have at least one chronic condition, 4.2 million adults over the age of 65 live in poverty, and nearly one in six seniors struggle with hunger. Decades of stagnant wages and the erosion of employer-sponsored retirement benefits and savings are grinding away at the economic security of millions of seniors.

As noted above, we have attached a comprehensive statement on the programs and issues that affect older Americans and our recommendations for policies that address these issues, and we would be most interested in meeting with you and your staff to discuss this. However, since we know that one of the first issues that will be under consideration is the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, we will focus the remainder of this letter on the importance of the ACA to older Americans. Again, we would be most interested in meeting with you to discuss the impact of repeal on seniors.

A high priority concern we have is the negative impact that repealing the Affordable Care Act would have on older Americans. LCAO strongly opposes repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). If provisions of the ACA are repealed, it is critical that a detailed replacement package be included in the same legislative vehicle. We are pleased and supportive of the position that you took in a November 13th *60 Minutes* interview. When you were asked about the period between repealing and replacing the ACA, you responded: “[W]e’re going to do it simultaneously... It’ll be better healthcare, much better, for less money.” If changes to the ACA affecting older Americans are considered, we respectfully request that you engage and work with LCAO and its member organizations to ensure that the needs of America’s seniors are met.

As discussions take place on repealing and replacing the ACA, please keep in mind that there are at least twelve critical provisions helping older Americans that have broad support and should remain intact. These include provisions to:

- close the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap or “doughnut hole;”
- provide Medicare coverage for critical preventive services, including an Annual Wellness Visit;
- reduce senior falls and manage chronic disease under the Prevention and Public Health Fund;
- improve access to home care services that save money and help keep families together, such as the Community First Choice program and other programs that expand access to Medicaid home and community-based services;
- extend the solvency of the Medicare Part A Trust Fund;
- enhance the quality and affordability of Medicare Advantage plans;
- provide incentives for states to expand Medicaid eligibility for low-income Americans, including older adults under age 65;
- make premiums more affordable for Americans age 55-64 who rely on Marketplace coverage;
- implement successful demonstration programs on Medicare-Medicaid integration under the Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO);
- test new financing, coverage and delivery system models under the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI);
- combat elder abuse and neglect; and
- improve nursing home quality standards.

Mr. Donald J. Trump, President-Elect
January 10, 2017
Page 3

It is important to note that, according to the nonpartisan Urban Institute, more than 4.5 million Americans ages 55-64 could lose their health insurance coverage by 2019 under the anticipated ACA repeal bill. This is largely due to proposals to repeal both the ACA Medicaid expansion and current protections limiting premiums that insurers can charge older vs. younger enrollees to no more than a 3:1 ratio.

Overall, the Urban Institute analysis estimated that almost 30 million Americans stand to lose their current health insurance under the anticipated repeal proposal. These and other American families at risk of serious harm deserve to know the details of what replacement coverage they can count on.

In general, America's demographic and economic realities present both challenges and opportunities for public policy at the federal level. We want to partner with your administration to strengthen the financial and health security of older adults and avoid proposals that would increase costs or reduce benefits for current and future generations of older Americans.

We look forward to working and meeting with you and members of your Administration to address the challenges and opportunities presented by America's growing elder population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Smith Sloan
Chair

Attachment