



June 17, 2019

The Honorable Rob Portman  
United States Senate  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bob Casey  
United States Senate  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Portman and Casey –

We are writing to thank you for introducing S. 1323, the Utilizing National Data, Effectively Reforming Standards and Tools, to Address Negative Determinates of Health (UNDERSTAND) Act, which would improve the collection of data related to the social determinants of health for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

Aligning for Health is a coalition of healthcare organizations and stakeholder groups from across sectors who recognize that health and wellbeing are determined by many important factors in a person's life. There is a significant body of evidence indicating that economic and social conditions such as safe and affordable housing, sufficient nutrition, access to transportation, and others, have a powerful impact on individual and population health outcomes, as well as medical costs.

We agree that encouraging providers to screen for and identify non-health factors that may contribute to wellbeing will help to enable more holistic and well-informed care. Additionally, the collection of such data at the federal level will help to illuminate healthcare disparities in the Medicare and Medicaid population, providing actionable data to policymakers to better target resources and support.

We look forward to working with you to advance this important bipartisan legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Krista Drobac". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krista Drobac  
Chair, Aligning for Health