



August 2, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Senator Schumer, Senator McConnell, and Leader McCarthy:

The announcement of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 is a welcome development for lung health as the country continues to deal with multiple health crises at the same time. Millions of Americans are at risk of losing quality and affordable healthcare coverage, and intense wildfires, record-breaking heat, extreme flooding and degraded air quality are plaguing the country. The American Lung Association is a trusted champion for lung health and has been urging Congress to make investments in a healthier future throughout the negotiations on an economic package. That is why we support the quick consideration and passage of the Inflation Reduction Act.

This bill provides quality and affordable healthcare for millions of Americans by extending the enhanced advance premium tax credits (APTCs) for three years. Currently, enhanced APTCs are set to expire at the end of 2022. Without an extension, an estimated 3.4 million individuals will lose their coverage and more than ten million people will see their premiums rise. Quality and affordable health insurance is critical for people who have or are at risk for lung disease to maintain their health and well-being. While the Lung Association advocated for the permanent extension of the enhanced APTCs, extending them for three years is a critical step in the right direction.

Another key healthcare provision included in the bill is capping out-of-pocket drug costs for Medicare patients at \$2,000 annually and allowing Medicare recipients to “smooth” their costs over the course of a year instead of having to pay that out-of-pocket cost all at once. This will help Medicare patients with lung diseases to manage their out-of-pocket costs and afford medications. Additionally, the bill will improve access and remove financial barriers to recommended vaccines, an increasingly important policy to protect the public’s health.

The Inflation Reduction Act also represents a major step forward in addressing climate change and cleaning up air pollution. Climate change is a health emergency and air pollution is impacting lung health right now. In our “State of the Air” 2022 report, the Lung Association found that more than four in ten people live in areas with dangerous levels of air pollution. Reducing the emissions that contribute to climate change will not only lead to long-term health benefits by curbing the worst health impacts of climate change, it will also lead to immediate health benefits as air pollutants from combustion-based electricity, oil and gas wells and vehicle tailpipes are reduced.

Providing tax credits to spur the development and implementation of clean energy technology and investments towards the adoption of electric vehicles, buses and trucks is a critical step in achieving a zero-emission, non-combustion electricity and transportation sector. Earlier this year, the Lung Association released an analysis showing that such a transition would yield \$1.2 trillion in health benefits by the year 2050. Holding oil and gas operators accountable for reducing methane leaks will curb climate change and reduce the emissions of harmful volatile organic compounds. The bill also invests billions in cleaning up pollution in environmental justice communities – areas that have waited far too long for the promise of clean air.

We will note that while it is a major step forward, the bill is not perfect. While the Inflation Reduction Act contains many key investments in a healthier future, we are disappointed in the omission of a solution to the Medicaid coverage gap and in the inclusion of investments in some harmful forms of energy production.

There are 2.2 million Americans in 12 states who cannot access coverage because their states have failed to expand Medicaid. This coverage gap disproportionately affects people of color, particularly Black Americans, and will continue to exacerbate health disparities around coverage, access, and health outcomes. The Lung Association cares deeply about ensuring the people living in non-expansion states have access to quality, affordable coverage. We urge Congress to continue to work to close the coverage gap in this legislation, and we will continue our efforts to improve access to healthcare and to achieve health equity.

The bill also makes a number of concessions to high-polluting energy that could negate some of the health benefits that the climate provisions aim to achieve. Requirements for offshore drilling will continue the investments in fossil fuel production, contributing to a warmer climate and the health harms that come with it. The bill also allows for biomass producers to receive investments. The American Lung Association does not support the use of biomass burning for electricity as it drives dangerous particulate matter pollution.

We will continue to work with Congress and the administration to address these policies so we can fully achieve a healthier future for all. In the meantime, passing the Inflation Reduction Act, with its significant investments in ensuring access to quality and affordable healthcare and action to reduce dangerous emissions, is an opportunity that the country cannot afford to miss. The American Lung Association urges you to support the Inflation Reduction Act and quickly send it to President Biden for his signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Wimmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'H'.

Harold P. Wimmer
National President and CEO

