



September 16, 2020

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Dear Dr. Altman and Dr. Song:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans (MAHP) we are writing to update you on the status of MAHP member health plans' assistance for primary care practices. We have appreciated the opportunity to participate in the MA Primary Care Alliance for Patients (MAPCAP) Task Force. MAHP began working with the Task Force at the request of our Board of Directors with the goals of exploring how health plans can help to provide short-term assistance to independent primary care physicians and independent primary care group practices who have experienced financial losses during the months when non-emergency, office visits were curtailed due the COVID-19 pandemic.

MAHP member plans recognize the important role that primary care physicians play in the delivery of health care services to our members. Primary care is the backbone of our health care delivery system and our member health plans have implemented and supported initiatives to reform the way we deliver and pay for primary care through moving to greater adoption of alternative payments. MAHP member health plans have further provided financial support for primary practices experiencing declines in revenue and utilization during the pandemic.

It is because of our strong support for primary care that the MAHP Board desires to help practices that have struggled during the pandemic and why we believe that it is important to continue the conversation with the MAPCAP Task Force to move the system to greater adoption of value-based payments and global payments. However, at this time, we are unable offer a standard, industry-wide solution for providing assistance for primary care practices and instead believe that the preferable approach is for individual discussions to take place between practices and health plans regarding the appropriate mechanism for each practice and the amount of financial relief for each practice.

As an organization, MAHP has spent a considerable amount of time working with our members to identify whether an industry-wide solution is workable. As you are aware, MAHP represents a diverse set of constituents, each in a different financial position and each with their own operational structures and contracting policies. Through our discussions, we have identified a range of operational and financial challenges, many of which we have discussed with you, including how to

construct a uniform policy across the various health plans to provide additional assistance, given that each health plan has entered into unique contracts with their network providers.

Additionally, and importantly, each MAHP member health plan is in a different financial position due to the pandemic and not every health plan is in the position to provide financial assistance to practices at the levels discussed. All health plans have responded to pressures from their customers, employers and individuals, for financial relief, with many plans providing such assistance to their accounts. Health plans must therefore balance all of the competing pressure for funds while ensuring that they maintain adequate reserves for future costs associated with the pandemic and returning utilization of health care services, which we are currently experiencing.

We are prepared and remain committed to working with you to do what we can for practices in the short-term and on the longer-term strategy to move to greater adoption of global payments, which could provide stability for practices going forward. To demonstrate our good faith, we are providing you with a list of contacts at each MAHP member health plan in the provider contracting departments that you may distribute to practices that are in need of assistance.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in the MAPCAP Task Force and look forward to continuing our work together. If you have any questions or need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Sarah Chiaramida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lora M. Pellegrini", with a stylized, flowing script.

Lora M. Pellegrini
President & CEO, Massachusetts Association of Health Plans