

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Health
Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health
Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

To Members of the Senate HELP and Finance Committees:

On behalf of Blue Shield of California (Blue Shield), I write to express strong support for the nomination of California Attorney General Xavier Becerra for Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Attorney General Becerra's deep knowledge of healthcare issues, distinguished record of working to improve the lives of vulnerable Americans, and remarkable personal story position him to be a uniquely effective HHS Secretary at this challenging time.

A son of working-class immigrants, Attorney General Becerra was the first member of his family to earn a bachelor's degree. Soon after finishing his undergraduate and law degrees at Stanford University, Attorney General Becerra embarked on a career in public service. He has held elected office in California's General Assembly, spent over 20 years as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and most recently serves as Attorney General of California. Informed by his working-class upbringing, Becerra has consistently advocated to improve health access and economic opportunities for the communities he served.

Blue Shield values Attorney General Becerra's leadership and commitment to preserving access to affordable, comprehensive health care for millions of Californians. As Attorney General, he repeatedly defended key Affordable Care Act (ACA) protections and fought for lower drug prices, including:

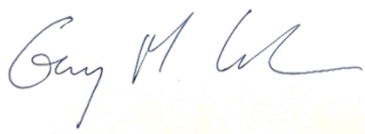
- Leading a coalition of 20 states and the District of Columbia in defending the ACA against total repeal before the U.S. Supreme Court. In that case, plaintiffs sought to strike the entire ACA—including its Medicaid expansion and provisions securing access to affordable coverage for 133 million Americans with pre-existing conditions;

- Guarding against the expansion of association health plans that can exclude key benefits and consumer protections otherwise required under ACA rules; and
- Tackling the affordability of prescription drugs, including pursuing collusive “pay-for-delay” agreements meant to postpone market competition to lower the cost of important medicines.

Attorney General Becerra also fought for California's consumers in reaching a precedent-setting settlement challenging anti-competitive pricing by a dominant healthcare system in California. That settlement is recognized as a national model to protect consumers from unfair pricing.

Blue Shield looks forward to continuing to work with Attorney General Becerra to improve access to affordable healthcare coverage for all Americans and advance our mission of building a healthcare system worthy of our friends and family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary M. Cohen", is positioned above a yellow rectangular stamp.

Gary Cohen
Vice President, Government Affairs
Blue Shield of California