



ANNA Supports the Primary and Behavioral Health Care Access Act (H.R. 3550)

The American Nephrology Nurses Association (ANNA) is a nonprofit organization with a membership of over 8,500 registered nurses and other health care professionals at all levels of practice. ANNA members work in settings such as chronic kidney disease management, peritoneal dialysis, hemodialysis, continuous renal replacement therapy, transplantation, industry, and government and regulatory agencies.

An estimated 37 million Americans live with chronic kidney disease, which can lead to kidney failure or end-stage renal disease (ESRD) – an irreversible condition that is fatal without a kidney transplant or life-sustaining dialysis. Approximately one in four Americans skip necessary medical care because of costs. Out-of-pocket costs can quickly add up for patients, and by reducing financial barriers for these essential visits, we will encourage patients to seek the medical care they need. The *Primary and Behavioral Health Care Access Act* would help patients access care earlier, to help prevent a diagnosis of kidney failure or ESRD.

Primary and Behavioral Health Care Access Act

The legislation was introduced on May 25, 2021 by Representative Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14). The bill would require group health plans and health insurance to provide three primary care visits and three behavioral health care visits without any out of pocket costs. **ANNA joins with other leading health care organizations in encouraging Members of Congress to cosponsor the bill (H.R. 3550).** The legislation includes the following:

- Behavioral health care visits include services related to the diagnosis, treatment, screening, or prevention of a behavioral health condition.
- Primary care visits include an in-person visit to a qualified provider. Qualified providers include the following:
 - Primary care visits to a general practitioner, family physician, general internist, obstetrician-gynecologist, pediatrician, geriatric physician, or advanced practice registered nurse (including a nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, and certified nurse midwife); and
 - Behavioral health care visits to a full-time provider (including a fellowship) for services related to direct treatment or recovery support of individuals with, or in recovery from, a behavioral health disorder. This includes a physician, advanced practice registered nurse (including a nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, and certified nurse midwife), psychiatric nurse, social worker, marriage and family therapist, mental health counselor, occupational therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, child and adolescent psychiatrist, or neurologist.