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August 26, 2020

Utah Health Care Reform Task Force,

I'm writing to express my support for a Medicaid waiver that would fund medical respite care for patients experiencing homelessness. In my role as Senior Medical Director for Homecare, Hospice and Palliative Care with Intermountain Healthcare, I intersect frequently with those within our system managing patients being discharged from the hospital without a safe place to continue their recovery and/or receive ongoing care. Healthcare organizations know the availability of housing is one of the most impactful social determinants of health. As Intermountain Healthcare looks to improve in providing high quality care for the most reasonable cost, we have recognized a fixable gap in how care is provided to and paid for in the housing challenged population. Currently, because of limited access to medical respite care in our community, hospitalized homeless patients are either kept in the hospital many days longer than needed and/or discharged to an unsafe environment where they are at high risk of returning to the emergency room and possibly being readmitted. These outcomes are costly, unnecessary and provide a very unsatisfactory experience for this population as well as for those providing their care. A benefit within Medicaid that covers medical respite will prove to have a win-win outcome with lower overall costs and better overall care for our homeless community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff McNally MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the letters "J", "M", and "D" being particularly prominent.

Jeff McNally, MD
Senior Medical Director

Intermountain Healthcare

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