Chairman Kevin Brady House Ways and Means Committee 1102 Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

September 13, 2018

Dear Chairman Brady:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to thank you for including an extension of the current 7.5 percent threshold for the medical expense deduction in your "Tax 2.0" legislation. However, a short extension seems inconsistent with the committee's overall efforts to make individual tax reforms permanent. We write to you today asking that=the medical expense deduction be made permanent.

As you know, for the past 75 years, Americans with high health care costs have been able to deduct medical expenses from their taxes. For the approximately 8.8 million Americans taking this deduction, it provides important tax relief which helps offset the costs of acute and chronic medical conditions for older Americans, children, pregnant women and other adults as well as the costs associated with long term care and assisted living. Medical expenses that qualify for this deduction can include amounts paid for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, equipment, qualified long-term care services costs as well as long term care insurance premiums. Families across the country with high health care costs face a constant stream of deductibles and high co-pays, and also pay out-of-pocket for various services and devices that enable the individual to live a productive life in the community.

Even with Medicare, beneficiaries spend a large portion of their income on out-of-pocket expenses. The average Medicare beneficiary spends about \$5,680 out-of-pocket on medical care. Furthermore, older Americans often face high costs for long term services and support, which are generally not covered by Medicare, as well as hospitalizations and prescription drugs. Tax relief in this area can provide needed resources, especially important to middle income seniors with high medical costs.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that tax filers with high out-of-pocket costs can continue to claim the current medical expense deduction in the years to come. We once again thank you for your leadership on protecting this important tax deduction. If you have any questions or need additional information you can reach out to Brendan Rose at 202-434-3922 or brose@aarp.org.

Sincerely,

AARP ACCSES ALS Association Alzheimer's Association Alzheimer's Impact Movement American Association on Health and Disability American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network American Health Care Association (AHCA) American Psychological Association American Seniors Housing Association Argentum **Colorectal Cancer Alliance** Critical Mass: The Young Adult Cancer Alliance **Family Voices** Fight Colorectal Cancer FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered Lakeshore Foundation Leading Age Lupus Foundation of America Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare National Council on Aging (NCOA) National Multiple Sclerosis Society National Patient Advocate Foundation National Respite Coalition Pioneer Network Susan G. Komen The Disability Rights Legal Center The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research Triage Cancer United Spinal Association Wellspouse Association ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer

CC: Ranking Member Richard Neal