

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA

WHEREAS, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters has historically been on the forefront on health care issues, and continues to be so today; and

WHEREAS, Teamster-affiliated health and welfare funds have provided good, affordable health care benefits to Teamster members and their families for over seven decades and continue to do so today; and

WHEREAS, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters believes all Americans should have access to affordable and comprehensive health care; and

WHEREAS, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters believes federal legislative and regulatory efforts are necessary to address the exorbitant costs of health care in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has expanded health care coverage and access to 20 million previously uninsured and underinsured Americans; and

WHEREAS, the ACA has reduced the amount of health care cost shifting from the uninsured to individual and group purchasers of health insurance and has reduced the financial pressure on medical providers, who are now paid more quickly and reliably and with less uncompensated care; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding all of the achievements and potential achievements of the ACA, certain provisions of the ACA have the potential to adversely affect the ability of Teamster-affiliated health and welfare funds to maintain the level of health care coverage they provide to Teamster members and their families by providing incentives to some employers to drop health coverage for their employees since the ACA employer penalties for not providing coverage are too low and have rarely been enforced; and

WHEREAS, although some features of the ACA which could have negatively impacted Teamster-affiliated health and welfare funds and their participants, including the so-called “Cadillac Tax,” that was successfully repealed because of the hard work of Teamsters and other unions, other features of the ACA, such as the rules for classification of “full time” employment for purposes of the ACA, the identification of what health benefits must be provided in order to be ACA-compliant, the definition of an “affordable” health benefit for employees and dependents, the provision of the “lookback” waiting period for health plan eligibility and many other complicated and uncertain requirements of the ACA still exist and have the strong potential to negatively affect Teamster-affiliated health and welfare funds and their participants; and

WHEREAS, despite the successful repeal of the so-called “Cadillac tax” that was originally part of the ACA, some legislators and policy advisors still advocate for the return of such a tax or even for repealing the tax exemption employers have received for decades to incentivize them to provide health care for their employees; and

WHEREAS, mental health parity, including substance abuse benefits parity, has increasingly been recognized by law, mental health and substance abuse benefits remain inadequate within many plans, with limits on the services provided, thereby causing disruption in care and patients sometimes seeking care from unproven medical service providers; and

WHEREAS, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) greatly enhanced certain aspects of the ACA for consumers by both providing increased federal premium subsidies and making subsidies available to more people temporarily for two years, and by creating a COBRA relief subsidy to provide COBRA benefits from April through September 2021 at no cost to employers, plans or employees; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED at this 30th International Convention that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters reaffirms its general support both for the goals of providing affordable and comprehensive health care to all Americans through the ACA and other legislative and regulatory efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters firmly opposes taxing working Americans on their employer-sponsored health benefits through any future efforts to remove the employer tax exclusion for health benefits or to impose taxes similar to the repealed so-called “Cadillac Tax” and encourages the officers and staff of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and all Teamster local unions and other affiliates to support legislative efforts to support the continuance of the employer tax exclusion for providing health benefits to workers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters will strive to improve mental health and substance abuse parity in health plan coverage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters will advocate for the ACA enhancements under ARPA to be made permanent and the COBRA relief provided by ARPA to be extended at least until the National Emergency Concerning the Coronavirus Diseases 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic is over; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters will advocate for regulatory and legislative efforts to contain and reduce health care costs in the United States;

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters encourages all Teamster-affiliated health and welfare funds and Teamster local unions to support legislative and regulatory efforts to improve access to affordable and comprehensive health care to all Americans in a manner that preserves and protects Teamster-affiliated health and welfare funds, such as increasing employer penalties for not providing ACA-compliant health coverage, removing incentives for employers to provide harmful high deductible and limited medical network options that undermine current Teamster benefit levels, providing better definitions of coverage and affordability, creating innovative health care methodologies that will contain health care costs and improve the health of Teamster members and their families, and generating opportunities for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to grow and to continue to provide our members and their families with access to affordable, high quality health care.

