

2020 Federal Candidate Questionnaire - Kali Barnett

1. Besides the COVID-19 pandemic, what do you believe is the most pressing health care issue facing Americans today? How would you propose to address this issue if you were elected to Congress?

The biggest health care issue facing Americans right now is affordability. The best treatments in the world could be right down the street, but if someone can't afford it or their insurance doesn't cover it, then it may as well not exist at all. We need to build on the strengths of the ACA while we work towards a more robust public option that ensures Americans can access healthcare regardless of their employment status.

2. What policies would you support in Congress to provide hospitals the necessary resources to effectively deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in their communities?

I would support real financial aid for our struggling hospitals--not loans as provided in the last relief package. I would also support expanding our Strategic National Stockpile so that it's available for all states and does not just exist to "supplement" local supplies.

3. The 340B drug pricing program has been essential for many Kansas hospitals who serve a high proportion of low-income Kansans. Do you support this program as it is or would you be recommending any changes to it like those being sought by pharmaceutical companies?

I would not support the changes being sought by pharmaceutical companies or any other changes that would restrict or raise 340B drug pricing. The only changes I would support would be ones to expand access, so more patients on fixed incomes can get the prescriptions they need.

4. What changes would you champion to reduce the regulatory burden for hospitals under the Medicare and Medicaid programs?

We need to be proactive in reviewing the administrative expectations for participation in crucial Medicare and Medicaid programs, while ensuring that important reporting and oversight is not lost.

5. What steps would you take to provide relief for small and rural hospitals to ensure they can continue to provide health care services to their communities?

First, we need to examine the loans provided through Medicare/Medicaid in the CARES Act for small hospitals who won't be able to pay such a loan back. Secondly, we should invest in the infrastructure of these hospitals to make sure they have the same state of the art facilities that would prevent people in their communities from seeking out other, out of town, options.

6. How do you view the role of telemedicine in our current health care system? Do you support any federal telehealth policy changes to make it more accessible?

Telemedicine has proved to be an invaluable resource during the pandemic when people were not able to leave their homes. In rural areas like the First District, telemedicine is essential so that those who don't live near a hospital or health center can still access a doctor. This is especially important for our seniors who are unable to travel long distances to reach a doctor's office. Telemedicine must be covered under all health plans so everyone can get the care they need, no matter where they live.