

Post-Election Anxieties – What Health Care Advocates Can Do Now

With Donald Trump's election and Republican control of the Senate, House, and potentially the Supreme Court, health advocates are understandably concerned about what will happen to the gains achieved under the Affordable Care Act. Our clients face losing access to health care from Medi-Cal and Covered California's subsidized health plans. As more information becomes available, we will share what will likely change in the Medi-Cal and Covered California program and what to tell consumers. Advocates should take note that even if the Affordable Care Act is repealed sometime between January and April of 2017, as promised by Trump during his campaign, many pundits predict that the implementation of such repeal will not occur for another year or two.

In the meantime, we offer the following recommendations:

1. **Medi-Cal is still open for business.** No new law has passed yet or is likely to pass until the first quarter of 2017 at the earliest. Any eligible consumer should be encouraged to apply and those already enrolled should keep using Medi-Cal.
2. **Covered California is still open for business.** Even in worst-case scenarios, premium tax credits and cost sharing reductions will likely remain for all of 2017.
3. **Advocacy at the federal level is critical.** Check with your program to understand the limits of federal lobbying that you may do using work resources, including equipment like computers and phones. Even in the strictest environments, such as Legal Services Corporation-funded programs, you still have your free speech rights when not at work or otherwise representing your employer. Phone calls to your congressional district office, rather than emails or petitions, are often the most effective way to make sure your message is heard. If your program is not restricted, do share with federal representatives the impact that the loss of coverage would have on your client community. Find your representative [here](#). You will then need to go to their website for local contact information.
4. **Encourage clients to voice their concerns to their representatives.** On a related note, when clients express fear or anxiety about losing coverage, they should be directed to their federal and state representatives and other decision makers that affect their concerns over their coverage. State representatives can be found [here](#).
5. **Identify good client stories that illustrate how the Affordable Care Act has improved lives.** Although understandably legal services tend to focus advocacy on where the health care system has failed, many clients are insured for the first time or receiving care for conditions that have long gone untreated. Story banking the positive impact the ACA has had on real people's lives so you can readily share those stories in your advocacy makes the messaging much more powerful.
6. **Understand what's at risk.** This [fact sheet](#) from Western Center identifies many of the specific many of the specific gains we made in our Medi-Cal program under the Affordable Care Act. Health Access has also produced a [fact sheet](#) on risks to other health programs.

Stay involved through listservs and information put out by partner organizations. As information becomes available, it will be shared on our legal services advocacy listservs. NHeLP's California Health Advocates and national Medicaid listservs are important tools for information. Sign up [here](#).