



Health Care Practice Tip of the Month March 2017

Talking Points in Defense of Medi-Cal

The American Health Care Act (AHCA), the Republican Bill to “Repeal and Replace” the Affordable Care Act, is currently before Congress and we must act quickly to defend the coverage of millions of Californians. Whether you are talking to your elected representatives, the media, or your family, arm yourself with the facts to defend Medi-Cal and fight ACA repeal efforts. On the eve of the 7th Anniversary of the Passage of the Affordable Care Act, here are 7 Talking Points to preserve and protect all the progress we have made in accessing health care.

**Call Congress at (202) 224-3121 to urge
your representative to reject the AHCA.**

1) 3.5 Million Californians will lose health coverage under the AHCA. ¹

- For the last three years, California has cut its uninsured rate in half. ²
- Out of the estimated 3.5 million Californians who will lose coverage under the Republican plan, nearly 3 million of those will lose Medi-Cal coverage. ³
- For the country as a whole, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates the AHCA would lead to 24 million Americans losing health coverage within 10 years. ⁴

2) The AHCA’s funding proposals do not “increase flexibility” because California will not be able to afford coverage for its existing Medi-Cal population

- The AHCA would slash funding for Medi-Cal, and it would be nearly impossible for California to provide the same level of services to the same number of people that it currently does. ^{5,6}

- The AHCA puts new administrative requirements on the Medi-Cal program, not less. ⁷

3) Per capita caps shifts costs to the states, which means people would lose coverage or access to services.

- The per capita cap proposed in the AHCA would not keep up with the cost of actual health care. ⁸
- California would have to raise revenue or cut services to continue covering eligible people.
- Studies show that the Medicaid program contains costs as well as, or even better than, Medicare and private insurance. ⁹
- Capping the amount of federal dollars spent on Medi-Cal may result in lowering the federal deficit, but it does so on the backs of poor and working Americans who struggle to get by in low-wage jobs that offer no benefits.

4) Most Medi-Cal expansion adults already work.

- The new Republican proposal for a “work requirement” for Medi-Cal eligibility is ineffective and punitive. ¹⁰
- More than half of California’s Medi-Cal expansion population are either working or actively looking for work, according to the UC Berkeley Labor Center. ¹¹

5) Repeal of the ACA is bad for the economy and results in a sicker California.

- UC Berkeley projects 200,000 jobs would be lost if the ACA is repealed. ¹²
- ACA Repeal would cost the state in \$20.3 billion in GDP. ¹³
- ACA Medicaid expansions resulted in increased coverage, better access, and better quality of health care. ¹⁴

6) The AHCA favors the wealthy at the cost of poorer, older Californians.

- The tradeoff for slashing the Medi-Cal program is that those whose incomes are above \$1 million would get a tax break. ¹⁵ Capping and cutting Medi-Cal will lead to low to middle income, hard-working Californians going without needed health care.

7) Federal block granting lowers the coverage standards for children, jeopardizing the health of the over 5 million children in California who rely on Medi-Cal.

- The latest Republican amendment to the AHCA virtually eliminates current mandatory coverage requirements for children and non-expansion adults in Medi-Cal through a block grant option.¹⁶
- Multiple studies show that Medicaid for children leads to better health and fewer disabilities in adulthood, fewer hospital and emergency room visits, and longer and more economically productive lives.¹⁷
- Over 5 million kids in California, or roughly 53% of the state's children,¹⁸ rely on Medi-Cal to get necessary medical, dental, mental, hearing, and vision services.

¹ Center for American Progress Action Fund, [TrumpCare by the Numbers](#) (March 17, 2017); California Health Care Foundation, [Facts and Figures on the ACA in California: What We've Gained and What We Stand to Lose](#).

² U.S. Census Bureau, [Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2015](#) (Issued September 2016).

³ California Health Care Foundation, [How Many Californians Would Lose Coverage Under the AHCA?](#)

⁴ Congressional Budget Office, [Cost Estimate for the American Health Care Act](#), Budget Reconciliation Recommendations of the House Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce, (March 13, 2017).

⁵ See Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, [House Republican Health Plan Shifts \\$370 Billion in Medicaid Costs to States](#) at 2.

⁶ Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, [Repealing Health Reform: California Fact Sheet](#).

⁷ See, e.g., the [American Health Care Act](#) §§ 112, 114, 116, 121 (March 17, 2017).

⁸ [CBO Report](#) at 10.

⁹ Kaiser Family Foundation, [Medicaid Spending Growth Compared to Other Payers: A Look at the Evidence](#) (April 13, 2016) (citing Sean P. Keehan, Gigi A. Cuckler, Andrea M. Sisko, et al. National Health Expenditure Projections, 2014–24: Spending Growth Faster than Recent Trends, *Health Affairs* 34, no. 8 (2015): 1407-17).

¹⁰ House Budget Committee, [Manager's Amendment \(Policy Changes\)](#). See also Kaiser Family Foundation, [Understanding the Intersection of Medicaid and Work](#); National Health Law Program's [Medicaid Work Requirements - Not a Healthy Choice](#) and [Medicaid Work Requirements - Legally Suspect](#).

¹¹ UC Berkeley Labor Center and UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, [ACA Repeal in California: Who Stands to Lose?](#) at 2.

¹² UC Berkeley Labor Center, [California's Projected Economic Losses Under ACA Repeal](#) at 3.

¹³ *Id.* at 5.

¹⁴ Laura R. Wherry, PhD, and Sarah Miller, PhD, [Early Coverage, Access, Utilization, and Health Effects Associated With the Affordable Care Act Medicaid Expansions](#), *Annals of Internal Medicine* Vol. 164 No. 12 (Jun. 21, 2016) (free download).

¹⁵ Center for Budget & Policy Priorities, [House Republicans' ACA Repeal Plan Would Mean Big Tax](#)

Cuts for Wealthy, Insurers, Drug Companies.

¹⁶ House Budget Committee, **Manager's Amendment (Policy Changes)**, at pages 10-18. Sara Rosenbaum, **The House Manager's Medicaid Amendments: The State Block Grant Option**, (March 21, 2017), at www.healthaffairs.org.

¹⁷ Karina Wagnerman, Alisa Chester, and Joan Alker, **Medicaid is a Smart Investment for Children**, Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, March 2017.

¹⁸ Kaiser Family Foundation, **Monthly Child Enrollment in Medicaid and CHIP** for December 2016.