

What Does the House Passing the AHCA Mean for Medi-Cal?

On May 4th, the U.S. House of Representatives brought the American Health Care Act, [H.R. 1628](#)¹, back from the dead. Instead of improving the bill that was overwhelmingly rejected by the American people, medical providers, and even many health insurers, the House took some amendments to make it even worse and then voted to pass a bill that most agreed, including some members who voted for it, was not viable. We cannot let this happen in the Senate because, if passed, the AHCA would profoundly harm California.

Now that the bill is in the Senate's hands, advocates should familiarize themselves with what the House actually passed to understand what could be in store for California and our Medi-Cal program. Western Center's [What Does the AHCA Mean for Medi-Cal?](#) explains how the AHCA's draconian changes to the Medicaid program – which go well beyond repealing portions of the Affordable Care Act – would play out in California's Medi-Cal program if the current iteration of the AHCA becomes law. *What Does the AHCA Mean for Medi-Cal?* breaks down the AHCA into two parts: the first part focuses on the mandatory provisions of the AHCA, such as the per capita caps on spending and the rollback of the Medicaid expansion, followed by the provisions that California could adopt, such as work requirements for beneficiaries and block grants.

All advocates should stay informed as members of the communities we serve will continue to ask questions related to the AHCA and what it means for their health coverage. Western Center and our partners are committed to keeping advocates apprised of any significant developments regarding the AHCA into what we hope is its relatively short future.

We cannot assume that the Senate won't pass the AHCA or something very similar. Much of the attention in the news focuses on the Senate's anticipated rewriting of the AHCA and the impact on the tax subsidies and pre-existing condition exclusions. But we are not talking nearly enough about how the AHCA will gut Medi-Cal. In March when Congress was considering the original version of the AHCA, we released [talking points in defense of Medi-Cal](#). Those talking points remain the same, only this time lobbying efforts should the focus is on the [Senate](#).

Advocates who are able to engage in legislative advocacy should use our talking points and other tools created by our partners to help defeat the AHCA in the Senate. California Senators Boxer and Feinstein have both made public statements against the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and cuts to Medicaid. Advocates should also reach out to people we know in other states about the importance of contacting their Senators to make sure those Senators do right by their constituents who would be devastated by the proposed Medicaid cuts. Once the AHCA is assigned to committee, such as the [Senate Committee on Finance](#) which has jurisdiction over Medicaid, educating committee members or staff on the harm that Medicaid cuts will cause will be equally important.

¹ Note that the Amendments to the AHCA are not yet published on Congress's website, but can be found by going to the Rules Committee website at <https://rules.house.gov/bill/115/hr-1628>. Amendments #4 and #5 from March 20th are relevant to Medicaid. Unfortunately a unified text of the bill and amendments has not yet been published.