

TELL YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO OPPOSE THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT!

On Monday night, House Republicans introduced the American Health Care Act, a bill that repeals crucial parts of the Affordable Care Act for people with mental illness, including the Medicaid Expansion and the subsidies that help low-income Americans buy health insurance. The bill also guts the Medicaid program over the next decade, jeopardizing access to care for millions of Americans with disabilities. The Bazelon Center opposes the bill.

The bill will be marked up in two committees tomorrow, March 8, in additional committees next week, and then voted on the week of March 20. This is not a done deal--Democrats have condemned this bill, as have several Republican members. Please call your representative, call your senators, and call your governor and tell them that the American Health Care Act will hurt people with disabilities.

Call your Members of Congress: 202-224-3121

Call the House Energy & Commerce Committee: 202-225-2927

Call the Senate Finance Committee: 202-224-4515

Call House Speaker Ryan: 202-225-0600

Contact your governor: <https://www.usa.gov/state-governor>

Talking Points:

As a constituent and a [person with a disability/parent of a child with a disability/supporter of people with disabilities], I oppose the passage of the American Health Care Act.

Message 1: I oppose the American Health Care Act because it would cut Medicaid!

Background: The proposal changes the way that the Federal Government funds Medicaid--rather than paying states based on the actual costs of healthcare for people in Medicaid, it sets a cap on the amount of money that will be paid, a cap that is totally unrelated to what the costs of care will be. This cap is designed to cut costs, and the bill uses those cuts to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. Medicaid provides fundamentally important services for people with mental disabilities: from healthcare services in the community for people with serious mental illness to services for students in school that enable them to learn. Medicaid matters!

Message 2: I oppose the American Health Care Act because it repeals the Medicaid Expansion!

Background: The ACA expanded Medicaid to all adults and children living at 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. People with behavioral health conditions make up 28% of that group.[1] In states that chose to expand Medicaid, millions of people with behavioral health conditions gained access to health insurance, including coverage of mental health and substance use disorder services. Access to Medicaid coverage, which virtually always provides more comprehensive mental health services than private insurance, has led to cost savings for states

and to more people with mental illnesses working.[2] If the Expansion is repealed, millions of people with mental illnesses will lose their insurance.

[1]Department of Health and Human Services, Judith Dey et al., Benefits of Medicaid Expansion for Behavioral Health (Mar. 28, 2016), available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/190506/BHMedicaidExpansion.pdf>.

[2]Jean P. Hall et al. Effect of Medicaid Expansion on Workforce Participation for People With Disabilities, 107 American Journal of Public Health 2, (Feb. 2017).