



*A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care*

## **Proposed House Action Threatens Health Coverage for Millions**

Statement by Sister Carol Keehan, DC, President & Chief Executive Officer

Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA)

April 26, 2017—Since the American Health Care Act was introduced in the House last month, CHA has said very clearly that this legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act would significantly undermine access to health care for many who desperately need it. According to the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation, in the first year under this legislation 14 million people who had just gotten health insurance would lose it, and approximately 10 million more would lose their coverage in later years. In addition, the legislation drastically changes and cuts \$880 billion from the Medicaid program, leading to reduced coverage and affordability for millions of our nation's most vulnerable populations.

The recent amendments to the bill, intended to make it more palatable to those who did not support it initially, are even more disastrous for people who have just gotten health care. Changing the current rules to undermine essential benefits requirements and protections for people with pre-existing conditions, as well as allowing insurers to set annual and life time caps on the care they cover, would seriously undermine health security and leave many individuals with substandard protection. Even the proposed state high-risk pools would be an inadequate and under-funded solution to a problem that need not exist in the first place.

It is critically important to look at this bill for what it is. It is not in any way a health care bill. Rather, it is legislation whose aim is to take significant funding allocated by Congress for



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health care for very low income people and use that money for tax cuts for some of our wealthiest citizens. This is contrary to the spirit of who we are as a nation, a giant step backward that should be resisted.

Lastly, we must point out that this bill has been crafted largely behind closed doors, with almost no input from providers of health care. CHA continues to believe that this moment calls for statesmanship on the part of both political parties to work together to make the improvements that will significantly improve and strengthen the gains made by the Affordable Care Act. We pledge ourselves to be helpful in every way possible in this effort.

*The Catholic Health Association of the United States is the national leadership organization of the Catholic health ministry, representing the largest not-for-profit provider of health care services in the nation.*

- *1 and 6 patients in the U.S. is cared for in a Catholic hospital each day.*
- *Catholic health care, comprised of more than 2,200 hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, systems, sponsors, and related organizations serve the full continuum of health care across our nation.*