



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

CHA Opposed to GOP ACA Repeal & Medicaid Cuts

Impact on Low-income Individuals

Statement by Sister Carol Keehan, DC, President & CEO

Catholic Health Association of the United States

(March 7, 2017) We are strongly opposed to the House GOP's Affordable Care Act (ACA) "Repeal and Replace" legislation that asks the low-income and most vulnerable in our country to bear the brunt of the cuts to our health care system. In addition to moving away from an effective coverage expansion that has provided health care to more than 20 million working people, this proposal would also take many backward steps in the continual effort to improve our health care system, including:

- Capping federal financing for the Medicaid program, which will lead to major reductions in benefits and coverage for vulnerable families
- Eliminating cost-sharing subsidies for low-income people
- Eliminating the income affordability adjustment for tax credits
- Penalizing individuals with pre-existing conditions with a 30% monthly premium surcharge for a year, should they have a lapse in coverage
- Creating barriers to initial and continuing Medicaid enrollment

This will substantially increase the number of uninsured people and uncompensated care costs for safety net providers. This nation is too great a country to pass legislation that substantially



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increases the number of uninsured by taking away coverage individuals and families just obtained, increases uncompensated care and disrupts the insurance market for the entire nation.

The Catholic Health Association's *Vision for U.S. Health Care* calls for health care to be available and accessible to everyone, paying special attention to poor and vulnerable individuals. Radically restructuring the Medicaid program—with per capita caps or block grants—fundamentally undermines coverage for over 70 million poor and vulnerable children, pregnant women, elderly and disabled individuals in our nation. Federal Medicaid funding caps simply shift the cost burden onto local and state governments, providers and individual beneficiaries, ultimately leading to the loss of Medicaid coverage for millions of individuals.

The ACA is not a perfect law, and we have always said it should be improved where necessary. This new plan does not improve the law—instead, it undermines it and leaves behind millions of people who have obtained meaningful, affordable insurance that was not possible before the ACA.

We strongly encourage the full House to reject this 'replacement' bill and work to craft legislation that addresses the real issues without creating unneeded chaos in the system and coverage loss for those who need health care.



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While there are many opportunities to improve both the Affordable Care Act and the Medicaid program by creating greater flexibility for state innovation, we believe this proposal will simply erode the safety net and jeopardize the health and economic safety of millions of Americans. We stand ready to work with all members of Congress to improve the availability, affordability, coverage and quality of our health care system in ways that do not harm those who need our help and support.

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 US is cared for in a Catholic hospital each day.*
- *More than 2,200 hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, systems, sponsors, and related organizations serve the full continuum of health care across the nation.*