



March 24, 2017

Dear Representative:

The Children's Leadership Council opposes the American Health Care Act (AHCA) because it would jeopardize health care for millions of babies, children, youth and families. We urge you to vote NO on this legislation.

The Children's Leadership Council (CLC) is a coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the lives and opportunities of America's children. Nationwide, CLC members work to advance the health, education and well-being of babies, children and youth in order to prepare them for school, work, and life. The CLC is the only national children's coalition solely dedicated to supporting investments in our nation's children and youth; and collectively, CLC's members have affiliates, partners, and members in every state in the nation.

The Affordable Care Act and Medicaid play a crucial role in the lives of children, including those facing the greatest challenges such as children in poverty; children suffering abuse and neglect; children in foster care, and children with disabilities. Medicaid, for example, provides coverage for approximately 37 million children, including children with disabilities, children in foster care and children from low-income families. Children are the largest group of Medicaid recipients, and nearly 40 percent of all the nation's children rely on the program for their healthcare. Medicaid provides health care treatment and preventive services, mental health care, case management and transportation services to and from medical appointments for children who are low-income or disabled. The ACA's changes to Medicaid would radically restructure a program that has worked for more than 50 years to support children's health. The Medicaid cap would shift \$839 billion to states, forcing them to cut eligibility, benefits, or provider rates that could have disastrous health consequences.

There is no question that the massive cuts to Medicaid, increased premiums likely for millions of families, and eliminating the Essential Health Benefits requirements under current law will seriously harm children and families. Maternity benefits would among the many medical services no longer be guaranteed if this bill were to become law. The massive Medicaid reductions in substance abuse treatment will add to the increases nationwide in the need for child welfare services because of the surge in opioid addiction. Families caring for children with disabilities will find supports for care at home jeopardized.

With a record 95% of children with health coverage in our country, the AHCA would turn back the clock on progress for children. Recent polling conducted by the Children's Leadership Council found 71 percent of parents, including 67 percent of Independent parents, (of children under the age of 18) wanted increased investments in programs that help children, including in the areas of education, health and nutrition, not less as proposed by the ACHA.

Congress has a strong history of working on a bipartisan, bicameral basis on issues, policies and programs important to children. It is our hope and expectation that members of Congress continue this history, as Congress works improving our nation's healthcare system. This legislation would be a dangerous step backward. We strongly urge you to vote no.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact Randi Schmidt, Executive Director of the Children's Leadership Council, at rschmidt@childrensleadershipcouncil.org or (202) 640-1077.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randi Schmidt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Randi Schmidt
Executive Director
Children's Leadership Council