

February 28, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing on behalf of the more than 400,000 physicians and medical students represented by the combined memberships of the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians, and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Our members are the front-line physicians who care for patients in rural, urban, wealthy and low-income communities, and are the foundation of the American health care system.

As you speak to the country tonight about health care reform, we ask that you use this opportunity to assure millions of concerned patients that they will not lose access and coverage for care that they rely on.

Any new health care legislation must not rollback the progress made over the past decade, specifically because of policies included in the ACA, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Medicaid, that have driven America's uninsured rate to historic lows, helped ensure access to essential benefits, and strengthened consumer protections for all Americans. While we support needed improvements, we firmly believe that your Administration and Congress should work together to ensure continuation of a viable health care safety net and vital patient protections in the health insurance marketplace. Specifically, we ask that you clearly affirm that any health reform plan must contain these assurances in order to earn your support:

- **Ensure a viable health care safety net for low-income Americans and their children.**

Medicaid expansion has resulted in more than 14 million Americans, most of who are from working families, being able to obtain affordable coverage. Overall, 76 million Americans get coverage from Medicaid, expansion and non-expansion states combined. We are concerned about any potential changes in Medicaid financing that would reduce eligibility and benefits, especially for children. Right now, we are experiencing historic lows in the number of uninsured children in this country, and that is in large part due to the success of Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, along with Affordable Care Act protections like allowing children to remain on their parents' insurance until they turn 26. As we face an uncertain health care landscape, it is especially important that we not leave our youngest members of society without reliable access to health care coverage.

- **Preserve coverage and affordability of health insurance through premium assistance and cost-sharing subsidies for Americans who have bought plans through the marketplaces or qualified for Medicaid coverage.**

Working class people are the ones most at risk of being priced out of having health insurance if premium and cost-sharing subsidies are eliminated or substantially reduced. The last thing our organizations want to see is for us to go back to the days when hard-working patients had to go without health insurance because there were no federal subsidies to help them afford the premiums or deductibles charged by commercial insurers. Many of these patients would delay or not seek care, leading potentially to serious health consequences

- **Preserve health benefits regardless of pre-existing conditions, family history, age, gender, race, national origin or disability and continue to prohibit insurers from establishing annual and lifetime caps on benefits for children, adolescents and adults.**

We are specifically concerned about women's access to health care services. Access to preventive health care, which includes contraceptive care, is essential to women living healthy lives. Prior to the ACA, having a C-section or being a victim of domestic violence were considered pre-existing conditions that made it more difficult for women to obtain coverage and access to care. 13 percent of pregnant women were uninsured--a time when prenatal care is critical to ensure healthy mothers and babies. Uninsured women with breast cancer were 30 to 50 percent more likely to die from the disease; and uninsured non-elderly women faced a 60 percent greater risk of late-stage cervical cancer diagnosis due to lapsed screening. We cannot go back to a time when our patients couldn't get coverage because of pre-existing conditions, family history, gender, or race. It is not acceptable to charge women more for insurance just because they're women, deny them maternity coverage, or drop a breast cancer patient's coverage mid-treatment because she's reached her lifetime cap.

Our organizations stand ready to partner with you and the Congress to foster more competition and choice, ensure well-functioning insurance markets, promote patient-centered care, expand choice of physician, ensure network adequacy, and encourage state innovation, as well as to protect our patients' access to needed care.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Pediatrics

American College of Physicians

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists