



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

February 3, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on HR 596, which would repeal the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)*. The AAFP urges Congress not to repeal this nearly 5-year-old health care reform law, but rather focus on how the measure can be revised to improve patient care and restrain health system costs.

The ACA addresses several important persistent problems with the nation's delivery of health care. First of all, it has demonstrably improved access to health care. As the most recent Gallup poll of the uninsured shows, the uninsured rate in the fourth quarter of 2014 fell to 12.9 percent, which is the lowest since Gallup began measuring it. By comparison, 17.1 percent were uninsured at the end of 2013. This substantial decline in the uninsured rate in one year has been broadly felt since it was evident in all the demographic categories.

Second, the ACA establishes critical insurance reforms to prevent abuses such as reducing or eliminating coverage due to preexisting conditions, or setting prohibitively high prices on the individual market based on health status. Third, it encourages innovation in health care delivery through extensive research performed by the CMS Innovation Center. As recently as last week, for example, CMS announced early results of the Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative which demonstrate significant cost reductions in the first year due to investments in primary care. Fourth, the ACA requires both Medicare and private health plans to cover preventive health services (without cost-sharing), which is a proven long-term strategy to improve health while reducing costs.

There are elements of the ACA that cause the AAFP concern, including the poorly constructed Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB). Congress should carefully review these elements with an eye to improving them for patients, for physicians and other providers, and for taxpayers, generally. The AAFP will continue to offer you our support for such efforts. However, in the meantime, it is important to avoid the disruptions and turmoil that repeal of the ACA would cause.

Sincerely,

Reid B. Blackwelder, MD, FAAFP  
Board Chair

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