

July 21, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association, (AMA) we urge the Senate to reject efforts to repeal or replace the Affordable Care Act. Recent revisions do not correct core elements that will lead to millions of Americans losing health insurance coverage with a resulting decline in both health status and outcomes.

In numerous communications this year, we have urged Congress to approach reform of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in a manner consistent with a number of key objectives. These objectives, embedded in AMA policy and ratified by the representatives of the more than 190 state and national medical specialty organizations represented in the AMA House of Delegates, have formed the basis for AMA consideration of reforms to our health care system. Among these priorities are efforts to ensure that those currently covered do not become uninsured; the preservation of key insurance market reforms and efforts to stabilize and strengthen the individual insurance market; ensuring that low and moderate income patients are able to secure affordable and meaningful coverage; and the provision of adequate funding for Medicaid and other safety net programs.

Unfortunately, neither the proposed “Better Care Reconciliation Act” (BCRA) nor the “Obamacare Repeal Reconciliation Act” (ORRA) adequately addresses these key concerns. Each bill results in millions more Americans without health insurance coverage, weakened markets, less access to affordable coverage and care, and the undermining of funding for state Medicaid programs. Furthermore, while efforts have been made to improve the bill through provisions such as supplemental funding to address opioid abuse and market stability funding, these investments are made necessary because of the reduced health insurance coverage and weakened markets brought about by the underlying legislation.

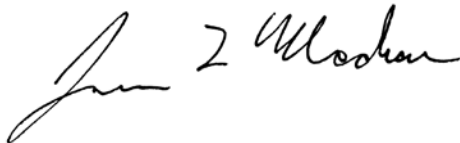
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Senators from both sides of the aisle have expressed interest in pursuing remedies to stabilize the individual market and foster greater availability and choice of health plans. We urge Congress to take this initial step. Longer term, stakeholders and policymakers need to work in concert to address the challenge of unsustainable trends in health care costs. The AMA is ready to work on both short and long-term solutions.

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act and the 21st Century Cures Act are recent examples of what can be accomplished to improve the health of the nation when Congress works in a bipartisan fashion and with key stakeholder groups.

Again, we urge you to reject efforts to repeal or replace the Affordable Care Act and work instead toward improvements that will increase access to affordable, quality health care coverage for all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD

cc: United States Senate