



March 24, 2017

Speaker Paul Ryan
Office of the Speaker
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Democratic Leader
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the more than 115,000 PAs (physician assistants) represented by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA), I am writing to express our concerns about recent changes to the American Health Care Act (AHCA), legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

AAPA is a non-partisan membership organization that proudly represents members with diverse views on the role of government in healthcare. AAPA has refrained from weighing in directly on the AHCA until now, but on behalf of our nation's PAs and the patients they serve, we must raise serious concerns with any legislation that would remove protections ensuring that health insurance covers essential health benefits. As medical providers, we are calling on Congress to preserve the requirement that health insurance covers essential health benefits such as maternity care, emergency services, prescription drugs, substance abuse, and mental health treatment.

AAPA policy expressly states that patients “have access to a variety of health services, and should be satisfied with the type and quality of care offered by providers and the healthcare system without restrictions due to pre-existing and other arbitrary condition-based exclusions.” AAPA is pleased to see the additional funding available to states to assist for mental health, substance misuse and maternity care, however additional funding alone cannot address the gaps in care that would result from eliminating coverage for essential health benefits.

Our policy also states “AAPA supports a healthcare system that will provide basic services to all patients.” We have significant concerns regarding the March 23 projections from the Congressional Budget Office that enactment of AHCA, as compared to current law, would result in an additional 14 million uninsured Americans next year, in addition to our concerns that the removal of essential health benefits would further erode coverage.

We hope any legislation Congress considers will protect coverage for our patients, access to care provided by PAs and other providers as well as maintain coverage for the essential health benefits our patients need.

AAPA looks forward to engaging with Congress on legislation that improves our healthcare system and places patients and their health at the center of future policy changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Josanne K. Pagel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Josanne K. Pagel, MPAS, PA-C, Karuna RMT, DFAAPA
President and Chair of the Board