

June 22, 2017

Letter to the Editor – Senate Healthcare Bill Damaging to Patients, Healthcare, Illinois

To the Editor:

As the U.S. Senate considers legislation (“Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017”) to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and make devastating cuts to Medicaid, the Illinois Health and Hospital Association has serious concerns about the harm to patients, hospitals, the healthcare delivery system, and our state budget and economy. This bill is even more damaging than the House-passed American Health Care Act.

More than one million Illinoisans have coverage through the ACA, including 650,000 under the Medicaid expansion. Hundreds of thousands of low-income working people in the state would lose coverage, and Illinois would lose at least \$40 billion in federal Medicaid funding over 10 years under the Senate bill.

IHA also strongly opposes changing Medicaid to a capped funding model which will cut federal funding and harm healthcare for all Illinoisans. Illinois already ranks 50th in the country in federal funding support per Medicaid beneficiary. Capped funding would lock Illinois into low, insufficient federal funding levels and shift costs to the state.

Illinois cannot absorb additional financial burdens that would be imposed on the state and would be forced to reduce eligibility, covered services, and payments to providers. The magnitude of these cuts and changes to Medicaid is staggering.

We urge the Senate to reject its current plan, and the members of the Illinois House Delegation to oppose it if it passes the Senate. There is a great deal at stake for the health and well-being of the people of Illinois.

A.J. Wilhelmi
President & CEO
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