



Valley Area Agency on Aging

Urge Senators Stabenow and Peters to Say NO to: Medicaid Caps & Cuts in Health Care Bill

June 20, 2017

In the next few weeks, the U.S. Senate may swiftly consider their version of the House-passed American Health Care Act (AHCA)—a bill only a handful of Republican Senators have seen to date. While ostensibly a partial repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), we believe that the Senate version of AHCA will retain the House’s devastating cuts to Medicaid. This is not just the ACA’s Medicaid “expansion population” to be clear—this is ALL of Medicaid, including the in-home and nursing home care provided to millions of vulnerable older adults.

AHCA would shift the current federal-state funding formula for Medicaid to a “per-capita cap”: no matter how costs rise, the federal government only pays a set amount per person, vs. a guaranteed percentage of the total cost. This leaves states holding the bag if the need for Medicaid services rises—such as greater demand for long-term care as our nation ages rapidly—and makes it too easy for the feds to let their share of the funding erode in the future. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated that AHCA would cut \$834 billion from Medicaid over 10 years.

Since states won’t be able to absorb that additional financial burden, Medicaid will no longer be the safety net so many Americans depend upon. Fewer people will qualify, fewer services will be available, consumers will have to pay more to access services and some providers will stop taking Medicaid.

It makes no sense to undermine the only long-term care option available to most Americans just as our country undergoes a transformational demographic shift to an aging nation.

Please reach out to Senators Stabenow and Peterson *immediately* to share your concerns with them! Congress must hear from seniors, caregivers, service providers and other stakeholders about the importance of life-saving long-term services and supports in Medicaid.

How to Take Action:

- **Put Your Concerns in Writing.**

If you can, put your concerns in a letter then fax it to your Senators. You can also email, but a fax will draw more notice. You can find your Senators' fax numbers on their websites (www.senate.gov) and you can email them right from that same site.

AND/OR

- **Make Two Short Phone Calls.**

If you'd rather call than write your Senators (or do both!), this is an easy way to be heard! Use the Capitol Switchboard (202.224.3121) to reach DC offices, or use the following information:

- U.S. Senator Gary Peters - Phone: (202) 224-6221 or (313) 226-6020
E-mail: <http://www.peters.senate.gov/content/contact-gary>
- U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow - Phone: (202) 224-4822 or (810) 720-4172. E-mail: senator@stabenow.senate.gov

Talking Points:

Medicaid is Critical to the Health and Well-Being of Millions of Older Adults

- Medicaid pays 60 percent of long-term care—more than any other source.
- AHCA cuts Medicaid, both acute care and long-term care. It does this by capping the amount of money the federal government contributes to Medicaid, which means states will be on the hook to cover federal cuts. States cannot absorb these costs!
- Total Medicaid cuts are more than \$800 billion over 10 years.
- The cuts in AHCA could result in higher Medicaid costs and reduced care, including co-pays and premiums for consumers, and waiting lists for services.
- We must preserve Medicaid's safety net guarantee in order to keep older adults healthy and living safely in their homes and communities!
- In the State of Michigan alone, 2,957,837 people will be affected by a decrease in Medicaid funding. 210,884 of Medicaid recipients reside in Genesee, Lapeer and Shiawassee Counties. Cutting Medicaid will have a devastating effect on their health and wellbeing. Services such as Personal Care and Home Delivered Meals would be negatively impacted by the reduction of Medicaid funding.

Sample Script:

My name is _____ and I work/volunteer with seniors in my community, many of which receive Medicaid funded services. [IDENTIFY YOURSELF AS A CONSTITUENT AND SHARE ANY RELEVANT PERSONAL INFORMATION YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE SHARING. For example, "I live in the town of _____ with my husband who is living with Alzheimer's. I am his primary caregiver, but he also receives in-home services from Medicaid which allows us to be able to stay in our home of 45 years."]

I am reaching out today to express my concern about and ask you to vote against any health care reform bills, like the American Health Care Act, that cap and cut Medicaid.

Changing the way that Medicaid is funded could lead to significant cuts to the health and long-term care programs many older Americans and their families rely upon. That just doesn't make sense. With more Americans living longer, we should be investing in our safety net programs like Medicaid at a time like this, not cutting them!

Please ensure that any new health care legislation does not cut Medicaid. Thank you.

For more information, contact Valley Area Agency on Aging (810) 239-7671 or the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) in Washington, DC: www.n4a.org, 202.872.0888.