



May 4, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Medicare Rights Center (Medicare Rights), I am writing to express our strong opposition to the American Health Care Act (AHCA). Medicare Rights is a national, nonprofit organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counseling and advocacy, educational programs, and public policy initiatives. Our organization provides services and resources to nearly three million people with Medicare, family caregivers, and health care professionals each year.

The AHCA risks access to affordable health care for older Americans, people with disabilities, and their families. Reported and recent amendments to the legislation in no way ensure that near retirees and people with disabilities—including those with pre-existing conditions—will continue to benefit from the coverage expansions made possible by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Indeed, according to available estimates, at least 24 million Americans will lose health coverage under the AHCA.

Before the ACA, Medicare Rights' counselors regularly fielded calls on our national helpline from individuals not yet eligible for Medicare who were desperate to find affordable health insurance. We remain deeply concerned that the AHCA's effective elimination of the Medicaid expansion combined with the law's changes to individual market coverage, including an "age tax" on premiums, will cause older adults and people with disabilities to pay significantly more for health insurance or cause them to go without coverage altogether.

The AHCA rewrites Medicaid by way of per-capita caps—cutting more than \$830 billion from the program. These shortsighted cuts will curb access to essential care when our nation needs it most, as our aging population continues to grow. This includes the one in five (11 million) people with Medicare who rely on Medicaid to cover vital long-term services and supports and nursing home care, to help afford their Medicare costs, and more. Even with increased inflation rates for the elderly and disabled, Medicaid per-capita caps will likely lead states to scale back benefits, impose waiting lists, implement unaffordable financial obligations, or otherwise restrict access to needed care.

Tax provisions in the AHCA directly undermine the Medicare guarantee for the sole purpose of providing tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. We strongly oppose a proposal in the AHCA to roll back a modest payroll tax increase that serves to strengthen the Medicare program's fiscal stability, and we are similarly concerned by

the repeal of a tax on pharmaceutical companies that will reportedly contribute to Medicare Part B premium hikes over the next decade.

For these reasons, we strongly oppose the AHCA. We continue to urge lawmakers to work towards bipartisan consensus on needed reforms to enhance health care access and affordability for older adults, people with disabilities, and their families. If you have questions, please contact Stacy Sanders, Federal Policy Director, at [ssanders@medicarerights.org](mailto:ssanders@medicarerights.org) or 202-637-0961. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" being more prominent than the last name "Baker".

Joe Baker  
President  
Medicare Rights Center

CC: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate