



Achieve with us.

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Dear Senator/Assemblymember:

Please Protect the Lifeline

We are writing to you today on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families living in New Jersey. We are deeply concerned about and adamantly oppose any repeal of the ACA without a replacement plan that maintains or improves existing coverage and access.

Hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans stand to lose a great deal should the ACA be repealed. But New Jerseyans with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (I/DD) stand to lose the most. Lifeline programs such as the ACA, Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security allow individuals with I/DD to not only meet their medical needs but they are key to their ability to maintaining their independence and living in the community.

The ACA allowed states, including New Jersey, to extend their Medicaid programs to low income adults. This change has provided coverage to hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans, including individuals with I/DD and other disabilities and chronic health conditions who were not otherwise eligible for Medicaid. The ACA also provided federal money to support Medicaid expansion. The additional federal contribution to expanding Medicaid has helped more people access health care without harming the existing programs that provide supports and services to people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Finally the ACA included strong nondiscrimination provisions and health insurance reforms such as preventing insurers from charging people with disabilities and health conditions significantly more for health insurance coverage and eliminating annual and lifetime caps on health coverage. Several provisions of the ACA were designed to assist states to rebalance their long term supports systems and invest in the community instead of costly and outdated institutions. These include the Community First Choice Option (CFC) and the State Plan Home and Community-Based Services Option (also known as Sections 1915(k) and 1915(i)).

Here are some facts about how repeal of the ACA will affect New Jerseyans: (1)

- 799,000 New Jerseyans stand to lose their health coverage.
- New Jersey stands to lose \$60 billion in federal funding for Medicaid, CHIP, and financial assistance for marketplace coverage.
- Approximately 205,000 New Jerseyans who currently get financial assistance to help pay for their health coverage will lose this help and will no longer have affordable coverage options.
- Approximately 3.8 million New Jerseyans with pre-existing conditions like asthma, diabetes, and cancer could once again be denied affordable, comprehensive coverage that actually covers their health care needs.
- New Jerseyans will once again face a world where insurance plans routinely cap the most they will pay for someone's health care in a year and in their lifetime, effectively cutting off coverage for the sickest individuals when they most need it. Roughly 3.3 million New Jerseyans (including 877,000 children) saw lifetime limits on coverage disappear thanks to the ACA's ban on these practices.
- Approximately 4.2 million New Jerseyans with private health coverage (including 887,000 children) and 1.5 million New Jersey seniors on Medicare will lose guaranteed access to free preventive care, like blood pressure screenings, immunizations, and cancer screenings.
- The Medicare donut hole will re-open. This will leave New Jersey's seniors and people with disabilities with a gap in prescription drug coverage and forced to pay thousands of dollars more in drug costs. Seniors and people with disabilities in New Jersey have saved approximately \$1 billion on drug costs thanks to the ACA's closing the Medicare donut hole.

We urge you to support children and adults with I/DD and their families, as well as the hundreds of thousands of others who rely on the ACA, by advocating that a repeal of the ACA cannot take place without replacement legislation that addresses these vital concerns and maintains or improves access to comprehensive and affordable health care.

As always, we thank you for your support of individuals with I/DD and if we may be of assistance to you, please feel free to contact us.

Robert P. Hage, President

Thomas Baffuto, Executive Director

(1) Statistics from "Defending Health Care in 2017: What Is at Stake for New Jersey", Families USA, December 2016, www.familiesUSA.org.

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities