



PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
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June 6, 2017

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

I am writing to provide the Physician Assistant Education Association's (PAEA) perspective on the pending American Health Care Act (AHCA), intended to replace the Affordable Health Care Act (ACA). PAEA represents the 226 physician assistant (PA) programs across the country, which together graduate more than 8,000 students each year. This year's graduates will join the ranks of the 115,000 currently licensed PAs to provide primary and specialty care to millions of patients in every state and health care setting.

We delayed our response to the House version of AHCA until the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released its report on the likely impact of the bill. As you know, the CBO report projects that the House version of AHCA would eliminate or make unaffordable health insurance for 23 million Americans who are now covered under the ACA. We are deeply concerned by this possibility. We are also troubled by the AHCA waiver permitting states to weaken or eliminate essential health benefits, including mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

PAEA recognizes that the task before the Senate is daunting and that the two sides are separated by divergent visions of how to deliver affordable access to quality health insurance. However, PAEA can support only AHCA legislation that ensures Americans have access to affordable health insurance coverage that matches that provided through the ACA. Anything less would be a major step backward and harm millions of American families.

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We ask that the Senate strive to conserve the ACA's coverage gains, and indeed expand them, because affordable health insurance is fundamental to achieving the best possible health for all Americans. As the legislative process moves forward, PAEA is ready to work with the Senate leadership to craft an AHCA that makes this vision a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Kohlhepp". The signature is written in a cursive style.

William Kohlhepp, DHSc, PA-C
President