



Working to Reduce Poverty in America.

March 21, 2017

United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative,

I write to you today on behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) to express our concern over the *American Health Care Act* (ACHA) and its proposed changes to Medicaid which would have a harmful effect on the poor and vulnerable in our community.

CCUSA's work is rooted in the Church's moral and social teaching which holds, in accordance with human dignity, that health care is a basic human right. Across the country, Catholic Charities agencies provided health care-related services to more than 860,000 individuals. These agencies see firsthand the devastating consequences of inadequate health care. We know individuals living on the streets because of untreated mental health problems. We work with persons who have physical disabilities and oftentimes are unable to get access to long-term treatment. We encounter families who have to decide whether they should feed their families or pay for their health premiums.

The legislation provides positive provisions to protect life and increase flexibility to states. However, by capping federal contributions to Medicaid and removing the requirement that Medicaid plans cover substance abuse and mental health services, the AHCA will jeopardize coverage for millions of Americans. The Medicaid program is a vital component of the social safety net, including funding nearly 50 percent of all births. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) indicated that the bill will result in as many as 24 million more people being uninsured in the next 10 years.

We continue to urge you to work toward a health care bill which protects the millions of Americans who gained access to coverage under the ACA and provides new opportunities to those still living without affordable health care. We look forward to working with you to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President and CEO

Episcopal Liaison
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Bishop of Pittsburgh

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