



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

Katie Smith Sloan, Chair

May 3, 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 Minority Leader Pelosi:

Since 1980, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) has been the country's preeminent coalition representing older Americans. Comprising 71 national, nonprofit organization members, LCAO focuses on the well-being of America's older population and is committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena. While LCAO is made up of organizations that often have different perspectives on public policies, as a coalition LCAO strongly opposes the American Health Care Act (AHCA) of 2017, which would cause at least 24 million Americans to lose their health care insurance.

We strongly oppose the Medicaid cuts and caps that remain the core of the American Health Care Act. Over six million older adults rely on Medicaid. Two-thirds of all Medicaid spending for older adults goes to essential long-term care services in the home, community and in nursing homes. We are deeply concerned that the more than \$830 billion in Medicaid cuts will harm the health security of older Americans and shift costs onto strained state budgets. We are also very concerned that by effectively ending the Medicaid expansion, this bill will take away care for low-income adults under age 65.

We oppose the AHCA provision that will accelerate Medicare Part A Trust Fund insolvency by about three years. This may fuel some to call for future cuts in Medicare benefits. We are concerned that the bill limits Medicaid funding for the 11 million older Americans and people with disabilities who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare.

Among the non-Medicare population, Americans aged 50-64 are the most likely to face health challenges and have pre-existing conditions. The AHCA will expose these older Americans to significantly higher premiums and health care costs, if they can afford to purchase coverage at all. This will occur because the AHCA changes the limits on age rating to the detriment of older Americans with modest incomes. In addition, the Meadows-MacArthur amendment would particularly harm older Americans with chronic conditions because it would allow states to let insurance companies significantly increase premiums for those with pre-existing conditions and cap benefits on an annual and life-time basis. Compounding the larger premium increases and loss of core consumer protections, the AHCA would also dramatically reduce tax-credits available for older Americans with modest incomes, likely causing many to go without coverage and necessary care.

The Honorable Paul Ryan and The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

May 3, 2017

Page 2

While the details of the Upton-Long amendment are not available, we are concerned that an additional one-time increase in funds for high-risk pools will not address the fundamental flaws in this bill for older Americans. High-risk pools have had a troubling and ineffective history.

We are also deeply disappointed that there is a push to vote on the bill without a revised estimate from the Congressional Budget Office on how it will impact Americans. We fear and expect that the proposed changes will increase the number of uninsured beyond the current estimate of 24 million.

For these reasons, as well as other harms that would result for older Americans and their families, LCAO opposes AHCA and urges members to vote against it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Smith Sloan

Chair

cc: Members of Congress