



American College of
Preventive Medicine

Media Contact:

Angel Waldron,
Director of Communications
202.466.2044 x116
media@acpm.org

American College of Preventive Medicine Opposes Proposed American Health Care Act

March 13, 2017 (Washington, D.C.)- The American Health Care Act (AHCA), legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to repeal and replace the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), does not align with the consensus-based [recommendations of the American College of Preventive Medicine](#) (ACPM). The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) today noted that the bill would eliminate insurance coverage for roughly 14 million Americans in 2018, and that number would rise to 24 million in 2026. Given that the legislation will reduce insurance coverage and eliminate support for key prevention and public health programs, ACPM cannot support it.

For any new legislation to build upon the progress made under the ACA, it must retain health insurance for those currently insured, continue the Medicaid expansion initiative to ensure a viable healthcare safety net, and ensure patient protections in the insurance marketplace, including prohibitions on benefit caps, on discrimination against persons with pre-existing conditions, premium assistance, and reductions in out-of-pocket payments. The bill shifts premium assistance away from low-income households and will increase out-of-pocket payments with the elimination of subsidies in favor of tax credits.

First-dollar coverage of preventive services is one of the hallmarks of the ACA, and while we applaud keeping this and the essential health benefits provisions for individual plans, it is unfortunate that this legislation ends essential benefits for some Medicaid plans. The continued rise in chronic diseases, including smoking-related illnesses, heart disease, and diabetes, costs the U.S. over one trillion dollars per year. Yet we know chronic disease can be prevented through access to comprehensive preventive services that ultimately lead to lower overall costs, increased productivity, improved quality of life, and saved lives.

This legislation also notably repeals the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), resulting in a 12 percent budget cut to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Such a massive cut would result in a 50 percent reduction to CDC's immunization program, which provides direct support to states and local communities to strengthen their vaccine and immunization infrastructure. Other important services funded by the PPHF include programs to prevent heart disease and reduce the risk of healthcare-associated infections in hospitals. A cut to the CDC's budget would not only result in less essential preventive care, it would result in the U.S. being ill-prepared for outbreaks such as the Zika virus and other threats that loom on the horizon. ACPM stands with its partners in medicine and public health in opposing any effort to eliminate the critical PPHF dollars made available to federal and state health agencies.



American College of
Preventive Medicine

ACPM is committed to improving our nation's healthcare system and expanding access to preventive services across all communities. The ACA was a step forward in the fight against preventable disease; we cannot afford to take a step back at this critical time.

###

About ACPM

[The American College of Preventive Medicine](#) is a professional society providing leadership in research, professional education, development of public policy, and enhancement of standards of preventive medicine for and on behalf of its physician members. Uniquely trained in both clinical medicine and public health, preventive medicine specialists are equipped to understand and reduce the risks of disease, disability, and death in individuals and population groups.