

President's Message

The Fight is Not Over: Keep Up the Pressure to Stop Passage of Damaging Health Bills



The Senate's delay of the vote on the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) is a victory. But it is a delay, not the end of the fight. Congress returns to Washington the week of July 10, and could take up this legislation then. Let's use this delay to keep up the pressure on U.S. Senators and Members of Congress to ensure they do not pass the BCRA or any damaging health care bills. This delay is also an opportunity to get out the word: the American Health Care Act (AHCA) and BCRA would not only repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), they would gut Medicaid.

Like many of you, I've been carefully tracking proposals unfolding in Washington as Congress attempts to restructure our nation's health system without hearings, committee meetings or debate. In fact, on Monday the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released a report showing that 22 million people lose health care coverage and millions of others will pay more for care and get less coverage under the BCRA.

I spend a lot of time immersed in this topic, so a poll done last week by the Kaiser Family Foundation brought me up short – *only 38% of those polled* – 4 in 10 – understood that the AHCA passed by the House of Representatives would drastically cut **Medicaid**. Medicaid is the health insurance program that provides essential coverage for low-income children and families and many of our nation's people with disabilities and seniors. The AHCA and BCRA both claim to repeal and replace the ACA. So, what has gutting Medicaid have to do with repeal and replace? Not much. These bills cut Medicaid to generate tax cuts for corporations and higher income individuals.

Both the AHCA and BCRA would radically restructure Medicaid financing, with dire consequences for New York. Under a per capita cap, funding would be based on a pre-determined amount per enrollee, locking New York into past spending levels and reduce federal payments over time. Any formula also puts future funding at risk as it can be used as a screw to reduce costs anytime Congress seeks funding for tax cuts or other programs. (For more information on how per capita caps work and the impact on children and families, please see our [fact sheet](#).) This mechanism would remove *billions of dollars* from New York's Medicaid program. *Billions*. No matter how dedicated our State is to covering families and improving services drastic cuts will have to be made.

But the terrible nature of these bills does not stop there – the radical restructuring of Medicaid puts [children with special health care needs](#) in jeopardy, threatens [EPSDT](#) and services for children in [foster care](#), would gut critical children's health services in [schools](#), pull health insurance from many [low-income parents](#) and harm families in [rural areas](#). And that list doesn't cover the aspects of Medicaid that would result in cuts to services and coverage for adults (even those requiring mental health and substance abuse services), persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

I realize you have been asked before to take action on these bills and we thank you for your efforts. We are asking you again because stopping these bills must be everyone's priority this week. All the indications we have from our partners is that we are facing a dire future in children's health and welfare if the Medicaid program is gutted. Also keep in mind that other programs in the State budget may be in jeopardy if drastic cuts to Medicaid requires resources to be diverted to maintain essential services.

If you have not already reached out to others in your community caring for children and families, please do so today. Contact your hospital, your community health center, and your local pediatric office. Reach out to your schools, your day care centers, your local health department. Seek out those working with other populations – find out who is involved in services for persons with disabilities, nursing homes and home care agencies. Contact your local media and editorial board. Explain to everyone how these Medicaid cuts will impact your local community.

We need to work together to carry this message to New York's Congressional Delegation: *Medicaid is essential to the health and well-being of New York's children. Gutting Medicaid, as proposed by these bills, will harm children.*

Watch the Federal Issues page on our [website](#) and read our messages. We will keep you posted on other actions you can take as events unfold in Washington. But don't wait. **Reach out locally and act now!**

Kate Breslin
President and CEO