

## Protecting Health and Long Term Services and Supports

### SUMMARY:

Our Congressman are headed home for a weeklong recess February 17-27. Please make an effort to visit your Representative and our Senators in their home offices, at town hall meetings, holiday parades, or rallies.

Congress has already begun the process of repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and it now is on the fast track to include significant cuts to the Medicaid program as part of the replacement plan through block grants or per capita caps.

Congressional leaders and President Trump have also stated that they will reduce funding to states for Medicaid through either block grants or per capita caps (a mechanism by which states receive a fixed amount of money based on the number of people in their state).

We must educate our Members of Congress to make sure that any health care reforms are as good as or better than the current law.

### TAKE ACTION:

1. Visit your Senators Corker and Alexander at their home offices or call using their local numbers:

Senator Alexander:

Chattanooga 423-752-5337  
Jackson 731-664-0289  
Knoxville 865-545-4253  
Memphis 901-544-4224  
Nashville 615-736-5129  
Tri-Cities 423-325-6240

Senator Corker:

Chattanooga 423-756-2757  
Jackson 731-664-2294  
Knoxville 865-637-4180  
Memphis 901-683-1910  
Nashville 615-279-8125  
Tri-Cities 423-753-2263

2. Attend a Town Hall meeting or other event.

**Nashville** *Save My Care Rally and Press Conference* February 22, Centennial Park, Noon.

**Knoxville** *Tennessee Health Care Campaign Town Hall* February 23, Whittle Springs Middle School, 2700 White Oak Lane, Knoxville 37917 6-8 pm EST

3. Urge them to vote against any bill to repeal the ACA (even with a delayed effective date) before replacing it with another law that will maintain or improve access to affordable and comprehensive health insurance and services.

4. Urge them to oppose Medicaid block grants and per capita caps, which would cut health and long term services for people with disabilities and add to already long waiting lists for services in many states.

5. Make sure everyone knows that Medicaid not only provides health care coverage for millions of people with disabilities but also provides long-term services and support, such as personal care attendants. Without those supports, many people with disabilities are not able to work, go to school, or be active members of their communities.

## **Talking Points ACA and Medicaid**

The ACA contains important insurance market reforms that benefit people with disabilities. It is critical to people with disabilities and their families to retain these reforms. These protections include:

- Prohibiting insurance providers from denying coverage to people with pre-existing condition (including disabilities) and prohibiting charging higher premiums or fees if a person has such conditions
- Prohibiting insurance providers from canceling coverage because a person acquires a condition
- Prohibiting insurance providers from placing annual and lifetime spending caps on coverage
- Prohibiting insurance providers from discrimination based on health Status, medical condition (mental or physical illness), disability, race, and gender
- Requires insurance providers to spend the money collected from premiums on medical care
- Requires insurance providers to include in their policies, at a minimum, a set of essential benefits that includes preventive services, rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices, and mental and behavioral health care

Medicaid block grants would provide a fixed amount of funding to states; per capita caps is a fixed amount of money per enrollee such as a cap for children, one for seniors, one for persons with disabilities.

- Medicaid is the major source of financing for health and long term care for people with developmental and other disabilities
- It provides coverage for 97 million low-income people
- It provides Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment for children & youth
- In any given month, Medicaid can serve 33 million children, 27 million low-income working adults, 6 million seniors, and 10 million persons with disabilities

Block grants or per capita caps would drastically reduce state's ability to serve and protect these vulnerable populations. **It would create significantly longer waiting lists for home and community-based services and put many people at risk of going into institutional care.** If a state's costs exceed the amount of the block grant or cap, it will have to use its own funds to make up the difference, cut services for low-income residents, or create waiting lists. Tennessee, while currently enjoying a strong state budget outlook, cannot afford to fund needed health and long term supports and services.