



May 15, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the more than 115,000 PAs (physician assistants) represented by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA), and the millions of patients they serve every day, we are writing to ask you to consider the effect of proposed policy changes on patients across our country as you work to improve America's healthcare system.

AAPA is a nonpartisan membership organization that proudly represents members with diverse views on the role of government in healthcare. As healthcare providers, however, we are concerned about the effect H.R. 1628, the American Health Care Act ("ACHA"), would have on patient access to quality health care and insurance coverage.

The ACHA, as passed by the House of Representatives, would remove important protections that ensure health insurance policies cover essential health benefits, and could affect protections for individuals with pre-existing conditions who have serious medical disorders that are costly to treat.

While updated projections are not yet available, the Congressional Budget Office projected an earlier version of the House bill would result in an additional 14 million uninsured Americans next year and an additional 24 million over the next ten years. As providers who see the human cost of policies that reduce access to medical care, we urge the Senate to prioritize patient needs as you consider changes to the ACHA or draft new legislation to replace it.

As the Senate crafts its own bill, AAPA encourages you to prioritize patient needs by promoting policies that:

1. Ensure Americans are able to obtain and afford healthcare coverage;
2. Retain access to meaningful benefits, such as maternity care, emergency services, prescription drug coverage, mental health benefits, treatment for substance use disorders, and other services now treated as Essential Health Benefits;
3. Ensure coverage without annual or lifetime limits that harm patients and families facing a costly illness, like cancer; and

4. Prohibit discrimination against individuals with pre-existing medical conditions.

AAPA looks forward to working with all members of the Senate to strengthen our healthcare system and keep patient interests at the center of the healthcare debate.

Sincerely,



Josanne K. Pagel, MPAS, PA-C, Karuna RMT, DFAAPA
President and Chair of the Board



Jennifer L. Dorn
Chief Executive Officer