

Talking Points to Senators

The Senate healthcare repeal bill makes health care worse for everyone - it raises costs, cuts coverage, weakens protections, and ends Medicaid as we know it. Based on reports it could:

- Reduce the tax credits that help people in the middle class afford their health care.
- Allow insurance companies to charge up to five times as much for people over 50.
- Let insurance companies deny coverage for maternity care, mental health care, and substance use treatment.
- Dramatically cut treatments for people with opioid disorders.
- Gives hundreds of billions in tax breaks to the wealthy and big corporations.
- Defund Planned Parenthood, which 2.4 million people depend on for care.

Republicans wrote their health care bill in secret because they wanted to hide the damage it would do until the last possible minute.

- There still has not been a single hearing, a markup, or any chance for public and expert input. Just one week before the vote, Senate Republicans released a discussion draft of the 142-page bill.
- A reminder about how the Affordable Care Act passed into law:
 - The bill was online for 3 months.
 - There were 200 bipartisan hearings and meetings.
 - It was the longest markup in decades - going on for 7 days.
 - It was on the Senate floor for 25 days.

There is no way to fix this bill - no matter what backroom deals they make in the coming days to buy off certain Senators.

- It does not matter if you are cutting coverage for 23 million, 20 million, or 15 million - you are still kicking millions of people off of their healthcare coverage.
- A possible \$45 billion fund for opioid treatment falls \$140 billion short in meeting the needs of the millions of Americans who will lose access to addiction and mental health treatment.
- Ending Medicaid expansion a few years later is still ending Medicaid expansion for millions.

Rushing forward on healthcare repeal and replacement shows Republicans Senators are ignoring the will of the American people.

- From polls to town hall meetings, people have rejected these plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act, wanting to keep what works and fix what does not instead.
- According to a [June 8 Quinnipiac Poll](#), less than one out of five voters supports the repeal.
- Republicans promised us they would never embrace the House healthcare bill that was rejected by voters, but that is exactly what they have done.

Medicaid 101

Background

- Overall, Medicaid is a reasonably popular program, with 66% of respondents having a favorable view of it (higher for Dems than Republicans, naturally)
- The fact that Republicans want to cut over \$800 billion from Medicaid is enough alone to alarm people
- Our messaging must be about cutting Medicaid as a whole, not just Medicaid expansion
- The addition of children makes it more compelling, so say ‘low-income people, including children and ‘low-income working families’ rather than just ‘low-income people’ when talking about who will lose coverage
- For Republican voters, the messages that worked best were that it will be harder to find long-term care for an aging parent or family member with disabilities/older people in your family who need home health care; similarly that there will be longer waiting lists for care and decreased funding every year even as the population gets older
- For Independent voters, the messages that worked best were that Medicaid cuts would force people to rely on ER visits that we all end up paying for with higher premiums and other health care costs, and that the Medicaid cuts go to pay for massive tax cuts to the wealthy and corporations.
- For Dem voters, the messages that worked best were the millions of people (low-income working families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities) who would lose access to healthcare.
- Other messages to use include that the changes would end the federal government’s responsibility and would cut the amount of money states receive from the federal government, regardless of the cost of providing care. The cuts to nursing home care and home health care were also of concern to folks.

Talking Points on Medicaid

- Millions of low-income Americans, including children, will lose their health coverage to pay for massive tax cuts for the wealthy. That’s wrong, and un-American.
- Working families, who already are struggling to make ends meet, will be especially hard hit. It will be harder and more expensive for them to get affordable nursing home care for an elderly parent, or homecare services that allow many seniors to remain at home (Medicaid pays for 60% of all nursing home care in the US). These massive federal Medicaid cuts will lead to cuts in care for people with severe physical or mental disabilities – especially children (Medicaid provides coverage for 60% of all disabled kids).
- Many healthcare providers – especially rural hospitals – will be forced to close as a result of these cuts. These cuts will be a disaster for many rural communities, because people in those communities will have less access to the care they need, where and when they need it.
- These cuts will cost people in other ways: many states will be forced to raise taxes or cut school funding because of the impact of these federal Medicaid cuts, and with more people being forced to get care in emergency rooms, people will be paying the difference in higher health insurance premiums.