



Capitol Hill Update – 7/24/2017

While we still do not know which health care bill the Senate will consider on Tuesday, we have gotten confirmation this weekend that a vote will happen on Tuesday. There are different versions of various bills under consideration:

First, the Better Care Reconciliation Act, which we've discussed before—there are two versions, one with and one without an amendment sponsored by Senator Ted Cruz. The Cruz Amendment would allow federal tax credits to pay for health insurance that need not cover mental health, substance use, maternity or other crucial services. This would result in two different risk pools--one for people with significant health care needs (who would pay higher premiums for insurance and in many cases would be effectively excluded from coverage) and one for people without such needs. These risk pools would take us back to the time before the Affordable Care Act when people with pre-existing conditions were routinely discriminated against and charged higher rates for insurance, or excluded altogether. We do not have a score on the bill with the Cruz Amendment. Without the Cruz Amendment, the bill would cause 22 million people to lose insurance, including 15 million on Medicaid.

Second, the Obamacare Repeal Reconciliation Act (ORRA), which would repeal all parts of the Affordable Care Act that can be repealed through the Budget Reconciliation process. It would completely repeal the Medicaid expansion in 2018, ending health care coverage for millions of Americans with mental health and substance use conditions. It would also repeal many crucial protections, as well as financial assistance that helps struggling individuals and families pay for health insurance. In total, 32 million people would lose health insurance under ORRA.

No matter what version of the bill will be voted upon, the drastic cuts to needed health care coverage in all versions are unacceptable and we urge all senators to vote NO on these bills. The earlier in the voting process we can end this, the better, and so we are also asking senators to vote NO on the "motion to proceed" to debate that they must vote on first.

Call your Senator: 202-224-3121

Call Majority Leader McConnell: 202-224-2541

Contact your governor: <https://www.usa.gov/state-governor>

Tell them: "As a constituent and a [person with mental illness/parent of a child with mental illness/supporter of people with mental illness], I am asking Senator [NAME] to vote NO on any of the health care bills currently under debate."

Message: Vote NO on the motion to proceed!

Talking Points:

- All bills under consideration end the Medicaid expansion, which has enabled millions of people with behavioral health conditions to gain health insurance, including coverage of mental health

and substance use disorder services. If the expansion is repealed, those millions will lose their insurance.

- **Senator [NAME] should oppose all bills that repeal the Medicaid expansion and since all of the bills under consideration do that, the Senator should vote NO on the motion to proceed.**

Message: Vote NO on caps or cuts to Medicaid!

Talking Points:

- Medicaid is the backbone of our health care system. It provides critically needed services for people with mental illness and other disabilities, including health care services in the community for people with serious mental illness, employment services, services that help people stay housed, and services that help students learn in school. Medicaid matters!
- **I ask Senator [NAME] to vote NO on the Better Care Reconciliation Act and any bill that caps or cuts Medicaid.**

In particular, if you live in Alaska, West Virginia, or Nevada, your Senators may have opposed versions of these bills before, but are under tremendous pressure to change their votes! We cannot urge you strongly enough to call Senator Murkowski, Capito, and Heller and tell them you support their decision to vote no and urge them to vote no on the motion to proceed. You can also support them in other ways:

Post your support for the Senator's opposition to the bill on her/his Facebook page-

www.facebook.com/pg/SenLisaMurkowski

www.facebook.com/SenDeanHeller

www.facebook.com/senshelley

Show your support for your Senator's opposition to the bill on Twitter-

@lisamurkowski

@SenDeanHeller

@sencapito

It can be something as simple as: Thank you and stay strong in opposition to a bill that makes health care worse for our state or cuts or caps Medicaid! If you want to share more, you can explain how you, your family, or your friends will be impacted by the changes to Medicaid.