



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

For science. For action. For health.

June 26, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 201515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champions the health of all people and communities, I write to urge you to support H.R. 1425, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Enhancement Act when it comes to the House floor for a vote next week. This important legislation would strengthen and expand the Affordable Care Act and includes important provisions to reduce the number of uninsured Americans by expanding access to quality and affordable health coverage, protect people with pre-existing conditions and reduce the cost of prescription drugs for consumers.

The Affordable Care Act led to historic gains in comprehensive health insurance coverage by expanding access to public and private coverage options, and ensuring that no individual could be denied health coverage due to a pre-existing condition. As a result, nearly 20 million people in the U.S. have gained health insurance coverage. H.R. 1425 would roll-back the administration's guidance allowing states to seek waivers to offer non-ACA-compliant plans and roll-back the administration's expansion of short-term health plans, neither of which would require coverage for pre-existing conditions or the ACA's essential health benefits.

Access to affordable health coverage is a critical component of a strong public health system. Research repeatedly demonstrates that people with insurance coverage are more likely to have a regular source of care and use preventive services, and are less likely to delay seeking needed care, require avoidable hospitalizations and emergency care, and experience adverse health outcomes. Importantly, this legislation would expand access to affordable health coverage by encouraging current non-participating states to expand Medicaid coverage, expanding access to health insurance premium tax credits and by providing states with funding to establish their own health insurance marketplaces. The bill would also reinstate funding for outreach and enrollment activities which are key to reducing the number of people without health insurance and reducing health disparities.

We also welcome provisions in the legislation to reduce the cost of prescription drugs including requiring the federal government to negotiate certain drug prices to ensure American consumers have access to affordable and fair prices for the drugs that many depend upon to live health and productive lives.

We encourage all members of the House to support this legislation to protect Americans with pre-existing conditions and expand access to affordable health insurance coverage. No individual should be barred from enrolling in health coverage due to health status or economic barriers. This legislation is an important step towards reducing health disparities and providing more families with affordable and comprehensive health insurance.

Thank you for your attention to our views on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'G'.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director