



June 29, 2017

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

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

Dear Senate Leaders:

On behalf of the Society of General Internal Medicine, I am writing to express our deep concerns with the latest iteration of the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) that is about to be voted on by the Senate.

SGIM is a national medical society whose mission is to lead excellence, change and innovation in clinical care, education and research in general internal medicine. As physicians, educators and researchers, we take seriously our responsibilities as stewards of the public's health. As such, we have grave concerns with the BCRA proposal or any similar legislation that fails to meet the basic thresholds of insurance coverage, including:

1. Ensuring that access to healthcare is a fundamental right of all Americans;
2. Guaranteeing that any changes to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) maintain or increase the number of Americans with health insurance;
3. Ensuring that Medicaid remains available to any individual who currently meets eligibility criteria and that cost-sharing in Medicaid does not increase;
4. Continuing access to evidence-based, affordable preventive services and immunizations, including full coverage of services rated A or B by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, with no cost-sharing;
5. Providing access to mental health and addiction treatment services, consistent with those afforded by the ACA; and
6. Preserving the patient protections contained in the ACA, including prohibitions against preexisting conditions exclusions and the retroactive denial of coverage as well as eliminating lifetime and annual coverage limits.

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As currently written, the BCRA legislation fails to meet the core principles outlined above, weakening rather than strengthening the health of the nation and adversely affecting our patients in many serious ways.

We strongly urge you to adopt health care legislation that will decrease the number of uninsured Americans and will ensure that all Americans will be able to receive affordable care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas H. Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Thomas H. Gallagher, MD
President, Society of General Internal Medicine