



Working to Reduce Poverty in America.

March 8, 2017

Representative Kevin Brady
Chairman,
Ways and Means Committee
United States House of Rep.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Richard Neal
Ranking Member
Ways and Means Committee
United States House of Rep.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Greg Walden
Chairman,
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Rep.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Rep.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Episcopal Liaison
The Most Reverend
David A. Zubik, D.D.
Bishop of Pittsburgh

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Marguerite Harmon

Vice Chair
Gregory Kefferle

Secretary
Charles Cornelio

Treasurer
Michael Connelly

President & CEO
Sr. Donna Markham OP, PhD

Dear Chairmen Brady and Walden, and Ranking Members Neal and Pallone:

Earlier this year on behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), I wrote to you and your fellow members of Congress urging that access to affordable health care be preserved and promoted by ensuring that any repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is done concurrently with a plan that protects the millions of Americans who have insurance or gained access to health care under the ACA, as well as provides access to health care for those still living without affordable health care. Unfortunately, the *American Health Care Act (AHCA)* under consideration by your committees today falls short of that goal.

The work of CCUSA is rooted in the Church’s moral and social teaching that holds, in accordance with human dignity, health care is a basic human right. The 2,598 local Catholic Charities’ agency sites across the United States and U.S. territories provide care and support to over 8 million people, including health care-related services to 869,634 individuals. Every day these agencies encounter the devastating consequences of inadequate health care: people living on the streets because of untreated mental health problems; those living with physical disabilities and unable to get access to long-term treatment; and clients struggling to decide whether they should feed their families or pay their health premium.

The *American Health Care Act* makes commendable efforts to protect the unborn and provide greater flexibility for States. However, capping federal support for the Medicaid program risks major reductions in health care coverage for over 70 million poor and vulnerable people and undermines access to life-saving health care coverage. While the ACA requires improvement, today’s legislation sacrifices health care coverage for those least able to afford it.

CCUSA looks forward to working with you to improve the legislation so that the progress made under the ACA is not lost, particularly for those members of our society who are poor and vulnerable. We also look forward to working with the committee to find ways in which health care can be provided for those who are still living without health care coverage.

Sincerely,

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President and CEO



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