



Working to Reduce Poverty in America.

September 21, 2017

United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

I write to you today on behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) to express our strong opposition to the “*Graham-Cassidy*” *health care repeal proposal*. Throughout the health care reform discussions, CCUSA has insisted that any reform must protect the millions who have access to health care coverage, or gained access to health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act, and must provide access to health care coverage to the millions still living without affordable health care. Like the bill that passed the House, and the previous efforts by the Senate, the *Graham-Cassidy* proposal falls far short of these goals and will have a devastating impact on the poor, marginalized and vulnerable in our country.

CCUSA’s work is informed by the Catholic Charities ministry’s experience and rooted in the Church’s moral and social teaching, which holds in accordance with human dignity that health care is a basic human right. Across the country Catholic Charities agencies provided health care-related services to more than 860,000 individuals. These agencies see firsthand the devastating results of inadequate health care. They see the consequences of untreated mental illness, they work to respond to the growing opioid epidemic and they support families who are struggling between the decision to pay their health care bills or rent.

Instead of expanding access to health care coverage, the *Graham-Cassidy* proposal reduces coverage for those least able to afford it. By ending the Medicaid expansion and temporarily block granting federal health care assistance under the Affordable Care Act, the proposal will not only deeply cut funding for the program but also eliminates all Medicaid expansion, tax credits and cost sharing reduction payments by 2027. In addition, the bill converts the traditional Medicaid program for those most in need into a “per capita cap” funding formula which previous Congressional Budget Office reports found will fundamentally restructure the program, cut funding and shift the risk of future cost increases.

While the legislation makes efforts to better protect life and increase flexibility to states, a bill that rolls back gains in health care for the poor and vulnerable is deeply regretful. The Medicaid program is a vital component of the social safety net, which provides access to health care at a lower cost than traditional insurance, funds nearly 50 percent of all births and provides access to life saving care for children, the elderly and the poor. True health care reform should improve the Medicaid program, not limit it.

Pope Francis reminds us that “access to health care services cannot be a privilege.” CCUSA urges you to reject the *Graham-Cassidy* bill and craft a health care bill which truly expands coverage, reduces costs and respects human life and dignity.

Sincerely,

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD  
President and CEO

Episcopal Liaison  
The Most Reverend  
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Bishop of Pittsburgh

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