



March 21, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the over 170,000 members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I write to express our opposition to the American Health Care Act (AHCA), which would repeal portions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and limit access to health care for millions of women. The ACA has greatly improved women's access to quality, affordable health insurance and care. The AHCA would put the health, well-being, and economic security of women in jeopardy.

AAUW believes that everyone is entitled to high-quality, affordable, and accessible health care.¹ Since the enactment of the ACA, about 137 million Americans have access to preventive services without cost sharing, including 55 million women.² Fewer women of reproductive age were also uninsured as a result of the ACA.³ The number of uninsured women ages 15 to 44 years old dropped by 36 percent under the first two full years of ACA implementation.⁴ AAUW believes these positive changes underscore the need for a robust ACA.

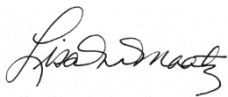
The American Health Care Act (AHCA) and the proposed manager's amendment would undermine many of these advances.

- By eliminating financial assistance for women and families to purchase coverage, the AHCA would make it harder for many women to afford health insurance. Because coverage would be less affordable, fewer women and their families would be insured and many would face new cost barriers to obtaining health care.
- In addition, AHCA's provisions to repeal ACA's Medicaid expansion and allow changes to Medicaid's funding structure will have a devastating effect on low-income families and on women of color.⁵
- For seniors, the AHCA is particularly problematic. The Congressional Budget Office score of the bill estimates that average premiums would rise 20 to 25 percent for 64-year-olds.⁶ Even with some limited additional support, as proposed by the manager's amendment, this puts affording health insurance out of reach for many.
- AHCA's provisions to defund Planned Parenthood would mean that many women would lose access to key preventive services – including birth control. This is a full-fledged attack on women's health, particularly for low-income women and women of color. Today, nearly 4 in 10 women report that family planning centers, such as Planned Parenthood, serve as

their only source of health care.⁷ Millions of people rely on Planned Parenthood to access critical preventive health services, and denying low-income women such an important access point will be devastating to public health. Coupled with the AHCA's additional restrictions on abortion care, women lose access to critical health care under this piece of legislation.

The AHCA and the proposed manager's amendment would weaken women's access to affordable, quality health coverage, and defund Planned Parenthood health centers. AAUW urges representatives to oppose the bill. Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record for the 115th Congress*. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Anne Hedgepeth, senior government relations manager, at 202/785-7724, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Maatz
Vice President for Government Relations and Advocacy

¹ AAUW. (June 2015). *AAUW Public Policy Program*. www.aauw.org/resource/principles-and-priorities/.

² Department of Health and Human Services. (February 12, 2016). *HHS FY 2017 Budget in Brief – CMS - PHI*. www.hhs.gov/about/budget/fy2017/budget-in-brief/cms/private-insurance-programs/index.html#coverage.

³ Guttmacher Institute. (November 17, 2016). *Uninsured Rate Among Women of Reproductive Age Has Fallen More Than One-Third Under the Affordable Care Act*. www.guttmacher.org/article/2016/11/uninsured-rate-among-women-reproductive-age-has-fallen-more-one-third-under.

⁴ Guttmacher Institute. (November 17, 2016). *Uninsured Rate Among Women of Reproductive Age Has Fallen More Than One-Third Under the Affordable Care Act*. www.guttmacher.org/article/2016/11/uninsured-rate-among-women-reproductive-age-has-fallen-more-one-third-under.

⁵ Black Women's Health Imperative. (March 15, 2017). *CBO Estimates ACA Repeal and Replacement Bill Will Devastate Black Women's Health*. www.bwhi.org/news/2017/03/15/imperative-in-the-news/cbo-estimates-aca-repeal-and-replacement-bill-will-devastate-black-women-s-health/

⁶ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (March 13, 2017). *CBO: Millions Would Pay More for Less Under House GOP Health Plan*. www.cbpp.org/blog/cbo-millions-would-pay-more-for-less-under-house-gop-health-plan

⁷ Guttmacher Institute. (March 2014). *Moving Forward: Family Planning in the Era of Health Reform*. www.guttmacher.org/report/moving-forward-family-planning-era-health-reform