



## **Congress must act now to prevent premium spikes and coverage losses for millions of Americans, say 20 patient and consumer groups**

WASHINGTON, D.C., Mar. 13, 2018 — *20 patient and consumer groups issued the following statement urging Congress to include legislation in the forthcoming omnibus spending bill to steady the health insurance market:*

“Congressional leaders must include provisions to stabilize the health insurance market in the March 23rd omnibus government funding bill to prevent millions of Americans from losing health insurance coverage. In the coming months, insurers will set plan rates for 2019 and a shaky marketplace will likely result in premium spikes—putting health insurance out of reach for many patients and families.

Several bipartisan proposals under consideration could preserve and even expand access to affordable health insurance for middle class families. They include cost-sharing reduction policies that could improve affordability for low-income Americans and the creation of a reinsurance program to help keep premiums stable for those with pre-existing conditions. We urge Congress to move swiftly, so that plans on state exchanges can stabilize, and perhaps lower, premiums for the millions of Americans who will turn to the marketplace for coverage next year.

Both parties in Congress have pledged to protect people with pre-existing conditions, but recent regulatory actions taken by the Trump administration to expand association and short-term health plans could undermine existing protections.

Recent data indicates that the number of Americans who are uninsured is on the rise again for the first time since 2008. At the end of 2017, 12.2 percent of U.S. adults lacked health insurance—up from 10.9 percent at the end of 2016, an increase of 3.2 million people.

Quality insurance coverage improves patient outcomes and allows Americans to stay healthy and remain financially secure. The vulnerable communities we represent simply cannot afford to lose access to health insurance that protects their livelihood and wellbeing.”

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association  
Arthritis Foundation  
Autism Speaks  
Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Family Voices  
Futures Without Violence  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
Lutheran Services in America  
March of Dimes  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Health Council  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
National Patient Advocate Foundation  
United Way Worldwide  
Volunteers of America

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