



December 13, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
S-221, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader-Elect
United States Senate
419 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
US House of Representatives
232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
US House of Representatives
204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Reid, Leader-Elect Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the nearly 30 million Americans living with diabetes and the 86 million more with prediabetes, the American Diabetes Association (Association) is writing to express our strong opposition to repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) without replacing it simultaneously with an alternative plan that does not result in loss of coverage or benefits for people with, and at risk for, diabetes.

The ACA provides numerous health insurance protections for people with, and at risk for, diabetes and has greatly improved access to adequate and affordable health insurance. The United States saw record reductions in the number of uninsured individuals in 2014 and 2015 after the ACA's major coverage expansions took place. The Association strongly opposes going back to a time when people with diabetes were routinely denied health insurance or forced to pay exorbitant premiums simply because they have diabetes; when treatment for preexisting conditions like diabetes could be excluded from coverage; when people could find their insurance coverage was no longer available just when they needed it most; when individuals with diabetes were locked into a job because they could not otherwise obtain adequate health insurance for themselves or their families; and when seniors in the Medicare Part D donut hole had to pay for 100 percent of their drug costs. The ACA is a carefully woven fabric, with requirements spanning all stakeholders in the health care delivery system, and it provides essential protections for the health and financial stability of patients with chronic conditions, including diabetes.

The ACA ended fundamental inequities in access to adequate and affordable health insurance that separated Americans with diabetes from the tools they needed in the fight against the horrific and costly complications of diabetes including blindness, amputation, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke – and death. Repealing the ACA will create huge access barriers for millions of Americans, especially if no fully



1 in 11

Americans has diabetes today.



Every **23 seconds**, someone in the United States is diagnosed with diabetes.

More than **18,000** youth are diagnosed with type 1 diabetes every year.



defined replacement is put in place immediately to meet the health care needs of individuals with chronic health conditions like diabetes. We are very concerned by emerging data, such as the recent Urban Institute analysis, of the implications of passing a reconciliation bill similar to the one vetoed in January 2016. The Urban Institute estimates the number of uninsured would increase by 29.8 million people in 2019.ⁱ As stated by the American Academy of Actuaries, repealing major provisions of the ACA without enacting a replacement at the same time will threaten the stability and sustainability of the individual health insurance market.ⁱⁱ

Congress should not risk critical advancements made under the ACA without simultaneously enacting a replacement plan that maintains or improves existing access to comprehensive, affordable health care coverage. At minimum, any proposal to modify or replace the ACA must:

- Provide coverage for at least the same number of people as under the ACA. No one should lose health insurance coverage as a result of the ACA repeal and replacement plan.
- Ensure continuous availability of health insurance coverage regardless of a person's circumstances.
- Ensure access to adequate and affordable health insurance coverage for everyone, regardless of health status, income, age, and employment.
- Continue to prioritize prevention, including prevention of diabetes and its complications.

Policies that expand access to coverage, such as those preventing preexisting condition exclusions and allowing young adults to remain on their parents' plans until age 26, are very important. However, these policies alone are not sufficient to ensure meaningful access to health care.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues as you consider changes to the ACA. If you have questions or would like to discuss this issue, please contact Meghan Riley, Vice President, Federal Government Affairs at mriley@diabetes.org or (703) 253-4818.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Shereen Arent'.

Shereen Arent
Chief Advocacy Officer

ⁱ Blumberg LJ, Buettgens M, Holahan J. Implication of Partial Repeal of the ACA Through Reconciliation. Urban Institute. December 2016.

ⁱⁱ American Academy of Actuaries. Letter to Paul Ryan and Nancy Pelosi. December 7, 2016.