



ELIZABETH A. RYAN, ESQ.
PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

April 5, 2017

Dear Member of Congress,

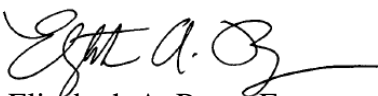
The New Jersey Hospital Association has been open and forthright in our opposition to the American Health Care Act (AHCA). As the bill currently stands, there are far too many dangerous implications for New Jersey families and the hospitals, health systems and post-acute providers that serve them. We were pleased that a few short weeks ago, House leadership decided that the AHCA would not be voted upon. But as the last few days have illustrated, the efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are far from over. We acknowledge that the ACA needs to be repaired, particularly on the issues of affordability, competition and network stability. However, as we understand it, the changes that are being discussed are problematic.

We are concerned about the 800,000 people who have gained insurance under the ACA, both through the individual marketplace and through Medicaid expansion. It appears as though the current debate is about providing more flexibility to the states to regulate and legislate a variety of the protections in the ACA. We are concerned that by allowing states to determine their own essential health benefits, hospitals, health systems and post-acute providers would see a large increase in bad debt from patients who despite having "health insurance" have eroded benefits like rehabilitation services, maternity care or substance abuse treatment missing from their plans.

President Trump and many members on both sides of the aisle have promised that individuals with pre-existing conditions would still be covered under any ACA repeal plan. However, we understand that the community rating provision is under review and may be removed as a requirement. This provision is critical to ensuring that those who may have a pre-existing condition can actually afford their health insurance. By eliminating the provision, it could create a scenario where insurance companies could set the premiums for a cancer survivor dramatically higher than that of their healthy neighbor. Patients need affordable health insurance coverage. We are very concerned that the removal of this provision will result in dramatic premium increases that will make insurance unaffordable to those with pre-existing conditions.

Lastly, any significant piece of healthcare legislation – be it an amended version of the AHCA or an entirely new bill – needs a review and score from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). Without the nonpartisan insight of the CBO, Congress would be taking action without fully understanding the consequences. We would urge you to allow us the opportunity to review bill language and communicate with you before voting. It is important that we all understand the ramifications of a bill that impacts 17 percent of the GDP before any rush to vote.

Respectfully,



Elizabeth A. Ryan, Esq.