

ACP urges Congress to 'move away' from harmful changes to patient care in AHCA

April 24 2017

The American College of Physicians (ACP) today sent a [four-page letter](#) to leaders in both the House and Senate urging Congress to "move away" from the harmful changes to patient care that would occur if the American Health Care Act (AHCA) were to become law. Instead, the letter written on behalf of the 148,000-member organization, emphasized that Congress should work for bipartisan solutions to improve the Affordable Care Act (ACA) rather than repealing and replacing it.

"We believe that the AHCA, which would repeal and replace the most important coverage and consumer protections created by the ACA, is so fundamentally flawed that it cannot be made acceptable," wrote Jack Ende, MD, MACP, ACP's president.

ACP expressed particular concern about a proposed amendment to the AHCA that makes the bill even less acceptable than it was before it was modified. The draft amendment, a summary of which was made available through news organizations, would create what is known as the "Limited Waiver Option" that would allow states to eliminate or severely weaken vital consumer protections established by ACA—specifically, community rating and essential health benefits (EHBs). The amendment would "return the country to the pre-ACA days when persons with pre-existing 'declinable' medical conditions in most states were priced out of the market and the insurance products available in the individual market did not cover medically necessary services," said Dr. Ende.

Dr. Ende noted that ACP "strongly believes in the first, do no harm principle. Therefore, we continue to urge that Congress move away from the fundamentally-flawed and harmful policies that would result from the American Health Care Act and from the changes under consideration—including the proposed "Limited Waiver" amendment—that would make the bill even worse for patients. We urge Congress to instead start over and seek agreement on bipartisan ways to improve and build on the ACA."

He concluded by saying that ACP welcomes the opportunity to "share our ideas for bipartisan solutions that would help make [health](#) care better, more accessible, and more that's affordable for patients rather than imposing greater harm on them as the AHCA would do."

Provided by American College of Physicians

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