

Improving the ACA's insurance coverage provisions will improve patient care

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The American College of Physicians (ACP) published a paper today in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* that examines ways to improve the Affordable Care Act (ACA). *Improving the Affordable Care Act's Insurance Coverage Provisions* provides a set of recommendations to strengthen the ACA and lay the foundation for health care reforms that will lead to universal coverage for all Americans.

ACP is committed to supporting policies that work to achieve universal [health](#) care coverage, and supported the passage of the ACA in 2010. However, while the ACA has made health care more accessible and affordable for millions of Americans, especially patients with pre-existing conditions, many still remain uninsured or face significant gaps in coverage. ACP's policy paper explores common-sense approaches to improve the ACA as internists continue to advocate for universal health care for all patients and consumers.

"Exploring ways to improve the ACA can help us better understand and address the unique needs of patients," said Robert McLean, MD, FACP, president, ACP. "It's important that physicians and other medical professionals account for how the ACA has made major progress in reducing the number of people who are uninsured, but also recognize that major challenges remain in providing access to care. I believe there's a lot more that can be done to reduce coverage gaps and ensure that every American has affordable health insurance coverage for vital care."

Promoting policies to achieve universal health care for all Americans is a longstanding goal of ACP. To protect patients and consumers and ensure they have access to quality care, ACP's paper calls for efforts to bolster the ACA, including stabilizing the health insurance market, expanding Medicaid, increasing competition in the marketplace, and amplifying awareness about how the ACA works to help patients and how to enroll in coverage plans. Additionally, ACP recommends that Congress enact legislation to develop a public insurance plan to ensure consumers have access to a variety of coverage options in their areas. The College also supports federal and state-led auto-enrollment programs to help make sure all individuals can successfully enroll in health care plans.

"We encourage congressional leaders and the administration, as well as governments at the state level, to embrace patient-centered [health care reform](#) and take concrete action to ensure that the ACA continues to protect [patients](#) and make the necessary changes that would improve coverage for all Americans," said Dr. McLean.

ACP's evidence-based public policy positions are based on reviewed literature and input from the ACP's Board of Governors, Board of Regents, Council of Early Career Physicians, Council of Resident/Fellow Members, Council of Student Members, and Council of Subspecialty Societies and nonmember experts in the relevant field. This paper was developed by ACP's Health and Public Policy Committee, which is charged with addressing issues that affect the [health care](#) of the American public and the practice of internal medicine and its subspecialties.

More information: Ryan A. Crowley et al, Improving the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's Insurance Coverage Provisions: A Position Paper From the American College of Physicians, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2019). [DOI: 10.7326/M18-3401](https://doi.org/10.7326/M18-3401)

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