Congress Committee's Plan to Cut Medicaid Will Lead to More Suffering and Death From Cancer

"Millions rely on Medicaid to prevent, detect, treat and survive cancer," warns the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.

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The U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee released a budget proposal late last night [May 11] that would drastically slash funding for Medicaid by $715 billion. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that these cuts will result in at least 8.6 million people losing coverage with no access to affordable health insurance options. There is no way these cuts can be implemented without drastically limiting or, in many cases, severing access to Medicaid coverage for millions of people across the country, including cancer patients and survivors.

ACS CAN sent a letter to the Hill Saturday outlining the catastrophic impact of the proposed cuts, including work requirements. The letter also calls out the compounding impact of these Medicaid cuts when combined with other proposals to dismantle health insurance coverage nationwide that are currently underway. The following is a statement from Lisa Lacasse, president of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN):

"As the leader of an organization committed to ending cancer as we know it for everyone, the House Energy and Commerce Committee's plans to cut Medicaid are alarming. No matter how it's packaged, cuts are cuts and cuts have consequences. The so-called savings from Medicaid in this proposal will be paid for on the backs of individuals who often have no other option for affordable health insurance, including those with cancer. It is unconscionable to force states to cut health coverage for cancer screenings, treatment and access to innovative cancer therapies or nursing home care.

"ACS CAN's tireless volunteers and cancer advocates have reached out to lawmakers nearly 67,000 times, sent more than 100,000 messages and more than 30,000 petitions already this year urging Congress to protect Medicaid. We are committed to making sure the voices of cancer patients and survivors are heard. Ripping Medicaid coverage away from millions of people nationwide is deplorable and will ultimately lead to more suffering and death from cancer.

"Research consistently shows that access to health insurance coverage through Medicaid

increases cancer screenings rates, early-stage cancer diagnoses, and improves access to timely cancer treatment and survival rates. Further, access to health insurance coverage is one of the most significant determining factors in an individual's chance to survive cancer. Medicaid protects individuals and families from medical debt, helps keep rural hospital doors open, creates jobs in our communities, and helps our nation become healthier and more prosperous.

"The result of these proposed Medicaid cuts will be devastating — lives will be lost, and state economies will suffer greatly. ACS CAN urges members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee to vote against these shortsighted, life-threatening cuts to Medicaid, regardless of the form they are presented in. There is simply too much to lose for the millions that rely on Medicaid to prevent, detect, treat and survive cancer."

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