

August 16, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

The undersigned healthcare, labor and community organizations call on you to listen to the words of governors, businesses, insurance experts and the millions of constituents we represent and help 7 million people retain affordable health insurance by committing to provide the cost-sharing reduction payments required under the Affordable Care Act.

Healthcare of all Americans, particularly the most vulnerable among us, is imperative and should outweigh any group's political goal to see the ACA implode. As a nation, we cannot afford such a catastrophe, as the consequences would seriously damage our healthcare system and the people it serves.

You have an opportunity to help stabilize the individual health insurance market by guaranteeing the provision of cost-sharing reduction supports for low-wage earners. Without these payments, more Americans will lose coverage and insurers will be hard-pressed to keep future premium hikes in check.

Democrats and Republicans in Congress have already begun to discuss fixes to the ACA that would benefit the country. In the Senate, Patty Murray and Lamar Alexander, who have a track record of working together to get things done, have announced bipartisan hearings. In the House, 89 Democrats have sent a letter to Speaker Paul Ryan inviting him to work with them on solutions to make healthcare more affordable and accessible. And, most recently, a bipartisan group of governors representing the National Governors Association called for these subsidies to be funded through 2018 in order to stabilize the individual marketplaces. Just yesterday, we learned from the Congressional Budget Office that withholding subsidy payments would send premiums skyrocketing by 20 percent next year and 25 percent by 2020, and would drive many insurers out of the market, particularly in rural areas. It is time to end any political gamesmanship and offer assurances that your administration will provide the cost-sharing payments that help keep out-of-pocket healthcare costs manageable for those in most need of this assistance.

Insurance companies are in the process of determining what rates to charge and whether to stay in healthcare markets. In part, due to the ambiguity you have created, a number of insurers are already predicting significant premium increases, and the Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that defaulting on these payments could cause the average premium for a silver plan to increase

by 19 percent.^[1] The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the nation’s leading hospital and doctors’ organizations have highlighted the impact destabilizing the individual market will have: “Analysts estimate that loss of CSR funding alone would increase premiums for all consumers—both on and off the exchange—by at least 15 percent. Higher premium rates could drive out of the market those middle-income individuals who are not eligible for tax credits.”^[2]

We urge you to follow the lead of Congress and the nation’s governors by working toward improving the ACA. The NGA had it right when it stated:

“The Administration has the opportunity to stabilize the health insurance market across our nation and ensure that our residents can continue to access affordable health care coverage. A first critical step in stabilizing the individual health insurance marketplaces is to fully fund CSRs for the remainder of calendar year 2017 through 2018. This is a necessary step to stabilize the individual marketplaces in the short term as Congress and the Administration address long-term reform efforts.”^[3]

We sincerely hope that you will put politics aside and make clear that you intend to continue making the subsidy payments so that our most vulnerable citizens will maintain access to affordable healthcare and not lose coverage. Once you provide this guarantee, we stand ready to work with you and members of both parties to make the necessary fixes to ACA so that all Americans can receive the high-quality healthcare they deserve.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers
American Nurses Association
Association of Flight Attendants - CWA, AFL-CIO
BCTGM International Union
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Communications Workers of America
Doctors for America
EverThrive Illinois
Every Child Matters
Indivisible Illinois
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers

^[1] Kaiser Family Foundation, April 6, 2017, www.kff.org/health-reform/press-release/estimates-average-aca-marketplace-premiums-for-silver-plans-would-need-to-increase-by-19-to-compensate-for-lack-of-funding-for-cost-sharing-subsidies/.

^[2] America’s Health Insurance Plans, April 12, 2017, www.ahip.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Joint-CSR-Letter-to-President-Trump-04.12.2017.pdf.

^[3] National Governors Association, August 2, 2017, www.nga.org/cms/news/2017/stabilize-state-health-insurance-marketplaces.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Legal Council for Health Justice
League of Women Voters of the United States
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Organization for Women
National Physicians Alliance
National Women's Health Network
NCNW
Organizing for Action- Springfield
Pride at Work
Public Citizen
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
RISE Stronger
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Social Security Works
The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
UNITE HERE
United Mine Workers of America
United Steelworkers
Young Invincibles