



ADVOCACY ALERT!

Tell Congress to Say NO to: Medicaid Cuts and Higher Costs for Seniors in Health Care Bill

ACTION NEEDED:
***Ask your U.S.
Senators and
Representative to
oppose the AHCA.***

March 22, 2017

The U.S. House of Representatives could be voting **tomorrow** on the first of several measures to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The American Health Care Act, the bill proposed to replace the ACA, also makes major changes to Medicaid by shifting the current federal-state funding formula to a per-capita cap structure.

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network opposes the American Health Care Act (AHCA), as it does not adequately address the health care needs of older Americans. The AHCA undermines federal support for Medicaid, weakening this key health and long-term care safety net. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has estimated that the bill would cut \$880 billion from Medicaid and jeopardize health care coverage for 24 million people. In Wisconsin, a big cut to federal Medicaid funding would mean less money for programs like SeniorCare, Family Care, IRIS, BadgerCare, aging and disability resource centers, the Community Support Program, and many more! If this bill is passed, Wisconsin would have to put more state taxpayer dollars toward Medicaid or find ways to cut costs like limiting services, benefits, or even making changes to who is eligible for programs.

Please reach out to your [Members of Congress](#) **immediately to share your concerns about this legislation!** Congress must hear from seniors, caregivers, service providers, and other stakeholders about the importance of life-saving home- and community-based services in Medicaid. They need to hear from advocates about how this bill would increase the cost of health insurance for older adults age 50-64 not yet on Medicare.

Take time to make a few short phone calls.

To reach your two U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative, call the **Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121** and ask to be connected to your **Senators or Representative** or look up your Members' direct D.C. office or district office phone numbers [here](#). To find out who your U.S. Representative is [go here](#) and enter your zip code.

Key Things to Know about AHCA/Talking Points:

Medicaid is Critical to the Health and Well-Being of Many Older Adults

- AHCA cuts Medicaid, both acute care and long-term care. It does this by capping the amount of money the federal government contributes to Medicaid, which means states will be on the hook to cover federal cuts. States cannot absorb these costs!

- Total Medicaid cuts are \$880 billion over 10 years. We believe this will undermine access to long-term care programs such as Family Care and IRIS.
- Medicaid pays 60 percent of long-term care—more than any other source!
- Cuts to Medicaid are a threat to over 1 million Wisconsinites. Two out of three people who use Medicaid in Wisconsin are children, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- The cuts in AHCA could result in higher Medicaid costs, including increased co-pays and premiums for consumers.
- The cuts in AHCA could result in reduced care waiting lists for services. Ask your Senators and Representative:
 - Will I (or my family member) still have access to the supports (adaptive equipment, transportation, personal care) needed to be able to live in the community if Congress cuts Medicaid?
 - If Congress cuts Medicaid, will waiting lists for Family Care and IRIS come back, forcing older adults and people with disabilities to once again wait years for community-based long-term care supports?
 - Wisconsin already has a lack of providers in critical areas like personal care, dental care, and mental health. How will big cuts to Medicaid funding fix these problems?
- We must preserve Medicaid's safety to keep older adults healthy and living safely in their homes and communities!

Older Adults Should Not Be Penalized for Their Age

- AHCA rolls back Affordable Care Act protections that cap how much more insurers can charge older consumers than younger ones.
- This means adults age 55-64 could pay five times as much, or more, for their insurance premiums than younger consumers.
- If this 55-64 age group goes under or uninsured, they are often sicker when they reach Medicare eligibility—only increasing Medicare costs in the long run.

Do No Harm to Medicare

- Although AHCA dramatically changes Medicaid, it does not make major changes to Medicare.
- But the bill eliminates ACA revenue measures that have extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund.
- This means Medicare would be insolvent four years earlier than experts previously thought (to 2024 instead of 2028).

The **Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network** is a collaborative group of individuals and associations working with and for Wisconsin's older adults to shape public policy to improve their quality of life.

Core member organizations:

- Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW)
- Alzheimer's Association SE Wisconsin Chapter
- Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (WADSA)
- Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A)
- Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS)
- Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND)
- Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC)
- Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)

Contact WAAN

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Make your calls today to let your representatives know how this legislation impacts older adults and/or to ask them to oppose the American Health Care Act!