

REPEAL & REPLACE ACTIVITY REPORT **FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 31st, 2017**

ACA Repeal and Replace

After demise of AHCA, Republicans regroup on ACA repeal^{1,2}

Although Speaker Paul Ryan announced at the press conference he held after he had pulled the AHCA from consideration in the House that “Obamacare is the law of the land... We are going to be living with [it] for the foreseeable future,” Republicans have begun to revive negotiations focused on repealing the ACA. It is currently unclear what path ACA repeal legislation would take, the timeline for the legislation, or what it would look like, but congressional Republicans and President Trump have expressed confidence in the success of future legislation. Speaker Ryan has said that more information would be given to donors at a Republican retreat in Florida on Thursday or Friday. Meanwhile, Nancy Pelosi has asked House Democrats to put together bills to improve and update the ACA.

ACA’s cost-sharing reductions still at risk under Trump administration^{3,4}

President Trump has the ability to pull funding for cost-sharing reductions (CSRs) by not appealing a court ruling in favor of the House that held that that cost-sharing reductions were not approved by Congress and therefore were not constitutional (*House v. Burwell*). President Obama had been in the process of appealing the District Court’s ruling, but President Trump could decide to stop the appeal and maintain the court’s decision. This would leave insurers on the hook for providing coverage to lower-income individuals with significantly lower cost-sharing. However, senior House Republicans on Thursday said that they expect the federal government to continue paying the CSRs for 2017 and possible 2018 as well.

Medicaid

Some non-expansion states consider embracing Medicaid expansion following defeat of AHCA^{5,6,7}

Following the momentary defeat of the Republican bill to repeal and replace the ACA, which would have dramatically changed the funding structure for Medicaid and reduced the support

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/28/us/politics/health-care-obamacare-freedom-caucus.html>

² <http://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/3/28/15098740/gop-ahca-paul-ryan-comeback>

³ <http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-pulse/2017/03/gop-loud-talk-about-aca-repeal-219481>

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/30/us/politics/health-insurance-republicans.html>

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/27/health/medicaid-obamacare.html>

⁶ <http://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/3/29/15072636/medicaid-expansion-florida-texas-ahca-obamacare-repeal>

⁷ <http://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/3/28/15081976/kansas-medicaid-expansion>

states that have expanded their programs under the ACA would receive, a number of states that had not previously embraced the Medicaid expansion have begun to warm to it.

Kansas' state House and Senate passed a bill that would expand the state's Medicaid program. The bill eventually went for approval to Republican Governor Sam Brownback, who vetoed it, tweeting that "it does not prioritize the vulnerable. It does not #DefundPP. It isn't responsible."⁸ However, the bill is only a few votes shy of a veto-proof majority. If passed, 150,000 Kansas residents would become eligible for coverage under Medicaid. North Carolina and Virginia face the opposite situation from Kansas in their struggle to enact Medicaid expansion: the Governors in these states support expansion but are opposed by Republican-controlled legislatures.

Other news

California continues exploring single-payer option⁹

California state Senators Ricardo Lara and Toni Atkins released new amendments to their proposed legislation for establishing a single payer health care system in California. The amendments still did not give information on how the new system would be financed, but it did clarify that every resident would be covered for inpatient, outpatient, emergency services, dental, vision, mental health, and nursing home care. Insurers would not be allowed to sell in the state coverage that cover the same benefits. Co-pays and deductibles would also be eliminated under the proposed system, and patients would not need referrals to see eligible providers. Governor Brown has expressed skepticism surrounding the financing of the bill.

⁸ <http://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/3/30/15123242/kansas-medicaid-expansion-veto>

⁹ <http://www.latimes.com/politics/essential/la-pol-ca-essential-politics-updates-what-would-single-payer-look-like-in-1490888709-htmstory.html>