



Republican tax bill “Sneaky Repeal” will cost Utahns who rely on healthcare

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CONTACT: Stacy Stanford
Utah Health Policy Project
Cell: 801-718-6130
Email: stacy@healthpolicyproject.org

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After months of trying and failing to undo the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Congressional Republicans have passed a tax bill that contains a “Sneaky Repeal” of the ACA’s individual mandate using a rushed process designed to obscure the dangerous impact of this and other changes. The consequences of this careless, partisan attack on the U.S. healthcare system are yet to be fully determined, but we do know that it will lead to fewer Americans with coverage, higher premiums, and a weaker individual market.

The mandate, combined with premium and deductible-reducing subsidies, is what makes sure everyone, regardless of health status, has access to affordable health insurance coverage.

Repealing the Individual Mandate is bad news for Utah because:

- 13 million Americans will lose their insurance coverage by 2027 - 4 million of them in 2019
 - Approximately 125,000 of those uninsured will be from Utah
- Research on mortality and ACA repeal concludes that this spike in the uninsured rate will lead to an increase in preventable deaths of more than 15,000 per year.
- The mandate enables pre-existing condition protections... The more that healthy people lose or give up their coverage, the more expensive and unstable the market becomes-- especially for people with healthcare needs

- This loss of coverage- and reduction in subsidies- will fund large tax cuts for the very richest individuals and corporations, while increasing the financial burden on low and middle-income Americans
- On top of the expected yearly growth, repealing the mandate is projected to increase premiums around another 10% annually
 - A family of 4 in Utah will face an average increase of \$2100, and the average 64-year-old individual would see their premiums rise \$1883 per year
- Because their premiums would be considerably higher, people with pre-existing conditions could be priced out of the market

Besides the mandate repeal, the passed tax bill will wreak havoc on other healthcare-related programs and protections:

- The bill will trigger a sequestration requirement called "Pay-Go", which will likely require future across-the-board cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, housing assistance, food stamps, special education, vocational rehabilitation, and other programs that are vital to persons with disabilities
- The bill also disincentivizes research into "orphan drugs," which can help cure or manage rare diseases
- Finally, this bill will blow a massive 1.4 trillion-dollar hole in the deficit, which will likely be used to bolster a push for entitlement "reform", and justify huge cuts to Medicaid and Medicare in the future

The undersigned organizations express our disappointment in Senators Hatch and Lee, and Representatives Bishop, Stewart, Curtis, and Love, and we condemn their support of this reckless legislation.

Utah Health Policy Project
 Disability Law Center
 Voices for Utah Children
 Manufactured Housing Action
 Comunidades Unidas

Matt Slonaker , Executive Director, Utah Health Policy Project :

"This may be a tax bill on its face, but it is also an attack on our health care system, taking health insurance from the poor in order to further enrich wealthy individuals and corporations." Matt Slonaker, Executive Director of Utah Health Policy Project stated. "Any potential meager tax cut poor Utahns received, will be gobbled up by higher health care costs."

Andrew Riddle , Public Policy Advocate at the Disability Law Center :

"Over time, cuts this big will undoubtedly result in drastic reductions to critical programs many Americans who are aging or have disabilities depend on to help them live, work, and play as independently as possible at home or in their community. It would be a devastating and inexcusable shame to lose the progress we've made along this path in the last several decades."

Jessie Mandle, Senior Policy Analyst with **Voices for Utah Children**:

"The GOP tax proposal will make it harder for working families to access affordable health coverage, and put children's health care at risk by requiring harmful cuts to vital programs like Medicaid."

Richard Robinson, Utah Representative, **Manufactured Housing Action**:

"Any cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Veterans Benefits, I am 100% against. Many Americans across the nation rely on these programs, to be able to live in their own home, to be able to go to the grocery store and buy food so they can feed their family a decent meal. These programs allow Americans to be Americans and live in dignity."

Maria Montes, Enrollment and Advocacy Coordinator, **Comunidades Unidas**:

"Tax plans can be powerful tools to help lift families out of poverty but the GOP tax bill isn't working to do so. Instead, the bill will only further endanger the well-being of America's low and middle-income families, while particularly threatening historically marginalized communities at the expense of America's wealthiest. In the end, these proposals will only help exacerbate the disparities that our communities were already struggling to come out from."

Media Contacts:

Stacy Stanford
Health Policy Analyst, Utah Health Policy Project
stacy@healthpolicyproject.org
Cell: 801-718-6130

Matt Slonaker
Executive Director, Utah Health Policy Project
matt@healthpolicyproject.org
Cell: 406-360-2981

Andrew Riggle
Public Policy Advocate, Disability Law Center
ariggle@disabilitylawcenter.org
Cell: 801-557-9182

Media Resources:

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/healthcare/news/2017/11/16/442906/senate-tax-bill-threatens-access-health-care/>

<https://www.cbpp.org/blog/roundup-cbpps-analyses-of-the-senate-tax-plan-0>

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/jct-estimates-final-gop-tax-bill-skewed-to-top-hurts-many-low-and-middle-income>

<http://blog.aarp.org/2017/11/21/health-provision-in-new-tax-bill-higher-premiums-and-loss-of-health-coverage-for-older-adults/>