

Repealing Obamacare Could Double Number of Uninsured Kids

Utah Public News Service
December 12, 2016

Article: <http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2016-12-12/health-issues/repealing-obamacare-could-double-number-of-uninsured-kids/a55325-1>

Audio: <http://www.publicnewsservice.org/mp3.php?f=rss-55325-1.mp3>

A new report says potential effects of repealing the Affordable Care Act include doubling the number of uninsured children in the United States. (Pixabay)

SALT LAKE CITY – With an incoming Trump administration and majorities in Congress, the Republican Party is poised to finally make good on its promise to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Researchers at the [Urban Institute](#) wanted to know what could happen if Congress partially repeals the ACA under a process known as “reconciliation,” which Republicans tried to do last January.

The Institute found a number of probable impacts. Jessie Mandle, a health policy analyst with Voices for Utah Children, says the move would be a big blow for health care in Utah.

“Utah stands to lose billions of dollars, really, in state and federal health care dollars,” she points out. “And that's going to have a huge impact on our state budget and really the strength of our overall safety net.”

Nearly 30 million Americans could lose coverage – 82 percent from working families, according to the Institute.

Federal health care spending would drop by \$109 billion in 2019 and by \$1.3 trillion over the next decade.

GOP leaders have long said they plan to repeal and replace Obamacare with a system that could include flexible grants to states.

Joan Alker, executive director of the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, notes due to the ACA, 95 percent of children in the U.S. have health insurance.

“But now, Congress is poised to take a U-turn and taking away affordable coverage options, which would actually double the number of uninsured kids,” she states.

If Congress approves a bill similar to one vetoed by President Barack Obama last January, Mandle says health care providers, and state taxpayers, also would be hit with the costs of uncompensated care, when patients without coverage can't pay their bills.

“Health insurance is the foundation, I think, for families and kids to have healthy outcomes,” she stresses. “When we're talking about what's at stake is that kids could lose coverage, and that our governments won't have the safety net to provide for families.”

The report says reconciliation could eliminate Medicaid expansion, financial assistance for coverage, and individual and employer mandates.

The move would not affect other reforms, including prohibiting insurers from denying coverage due to preexisting conditions.