

June 20, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Private Practice Section (PPS) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), which represents over 4200 members nationwide, I write to share concerns we have regarding the potential content of American Health Care Act (AHCA), as well as the lack of transparency of process. Legislation that affects one-sixth of America's economy should be drafted in an open forum.

PPS endeavors to foster the growth, economic viability, and business success of physical therapist-owned physical therapy services provided for the benefit of the public. PPS members deliver a valuable service to communities in all fifty states and they do so in a convenient, cost-effective manner. As community-based providers, PPS members serve patients whose care is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, the Veterans Administration, as well as private insurance.

We are pleased to hear that guaranteed protections for people with preexisting medical conditions are likely to be preserved, and they should be. In addition, we want to caution that if community rating is not maintained, there is little to ensure such individuals are not charged more for insurance coverage. And if insurers are once again allowed to impose annual and lifetime caps on coverage, a life-threatening illness or accident could easily become a financial catastrophe.

While PPS wants the Senate to maintain the ACA's Medicaid expansion, if the Senate chooses to phase out the expansion, PPS encourages it to pursue a seven-year roll-back. Furthermore, PPS supports increasing tax credits for people purchasing individual insurance coverage beyond what was included in the House-passed bill—especially for those between the ages of 50 and 64. Most importantly, PPS strenuously opposes undoing the ACA's federal requirements mandates for essential health benefits (EHBs), which includes the habilitative and rehabilitative care that physical therapists provide. Eroding the EHBs would allow for the sale of "insurance" that would not cover the fundamental healthcare needs of enrollees.

With regard to process, PPS strongly encourages the Senate to employ usual order in dealing with the repeal and replacement of Obamacare. This would include developing the bill in open forums, committee hearings, and mark-ups where committee members from both parties could not only discuss the content, but offer amendments to the legislative language to be considered by the full Senate. It would also allow for stakeholder input, which is fundamentally important for the development of quality policy that responds to the needs of the American people.

As we have all along, PPS is eager to continue to work with Congress to ensure access to affordable, quality healthcare to all Americans, regardless of their age, health status, or economic limitations.

Sincerely,



Terrence Brown, PT, DPT
President, Private Practice Section of APTA