

THE AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE ACT & WOMEN'S HEALTH

OVERVIEW:



In the 115th Congress, Republican lawmakers are prioritizing the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). On March 24th, the American Health Care Act (AHCA) did not have the votes to pass in the U.S. House of Representatives. With the addition of amendments that appealed to the far-right of the Republican Party, the AHCA passed in the House of Representatives on May 5th. These amendments made the AHCA even worse for women.

Currently, the bill language is being negotiated in the U.S. Senate in preparation for a vote. The GOP has had their sights set on repealing the ACA since 2010. It is time to hold our lawmakers accountable and fight back against this anti-woman legislation.

HOW THE ACA BENEFITS WOMEN:

According to the Center for American Progress, approximately 9.5 million women who were previously uninsured have gained health coverage through the ACA and 55 million women now have access to preventive care without copays or deductibles. Annually, the ACA saves women 1.4 billion dollars in birth control copays. If the ACA is repealed, many women will have to pay out of pocket for birth control, making it less accessible and costlier.

HOW THE AHCA HURTS WOMEN

The American Health Care Act not only seeks to strip access to affordable birth control, but also limit affordable access to annual exams, contraception, screening for sexually transmitted infections, and counseling for domestic and intimate partner violence. These provisions are part of the ACA's ten Essential Health Benefits. The amended version of the AHCA empowers states to opt out of these essential health benefits to cut costs at the price of women's lives.

BEING A WOMAN IS A PRE-EXISTING CONDITION

Even worse, the AHCA allows insurers to treat sexual assault, domestic violence, postpartum depression, pregnancy, and Caesarean sections as preexisting conditions - charging women who have experienced them more or denying coverage entirely. Before the ACA, insurers treated these experiences as pre-existing conditions, and limited coverage as a result. And because of the recently passed House-version of the AHCA, it's possible insurers may do so again.





These provisions have the potential to impact a large portion of women--- some of whom have experienced sexual and physical trauma and violence. About 32% of mothers have had a C-section. One in six women are victims of sexual assault, while 30% have experienced some form of domestic abuse.

Essentially, healthcare providers could tell survivors of sexual assault that because they suffer from PTSD and/ or have an STI as a result of their trauma, they are too expensive to cover. This will not only impact women who have experienced trauma, but also discourage reporting of sexual assault and domestic violence. That makes preserving the ACA not only an issue of healthcare, but an issue of justice.

NOW'S ACTION AGENDA:

- Vote "NO" on the AHCA.
- Oppose any measure to repeal the ACA unless its replacement retains existing protections against pre-existing conditions, lifetime coverage caps, and gender-based discrimination, and adds improvements such as including a public option in states without sufficient market competition from private insurers.
- Support improvements to affordable health care overall, for example with the EACH Woman Act.

