

November 16, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), our 37,000 members, and the more than 136 million patients we treat every year, I write to express our strong concerns with the proposal to repeal the individual mandate as part of the ongoing legislative effort to reform our nation's tax code. In order to ensure the continued stability of the individual insurance market and prevent large premium increases, we urge you not to repeal the individual mandate and instead consider proposals to ensure greater access to affordable health care options that maintain guaranteed access to emergency services.

ACEP believes that all Americans must have health care coverage and that any proposed reforms should increase access to coverage, improve the quality of care, and result in lower costs. Unfortunately, a simple repeal of the individual mandate would result in devastating consequences for emergency medicine patients. According to the most recent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate, repealing the individual mandate would result in 13 million fewer Americans with health insurance coverage. Such a drastic change in the composition of the risk pool would destabilize the individual market and require significant premium increases that would only make coverage less affordable and further restrict access to care. Further, enacting this policy with the promise that other reforms will follow in the future does not provide the certainty our health care system needs, and most importantly, our patients deserve.

As emergency physicians, we know better than most that coverage alone does not always equal access, but we must not ignore the gains our country has made in reducing the uninsured rate to a record low of 8.6%. ACEP believes that no one in this country should ever be without necessary care because of an inability to afford it, and we suggest that our collective efforts to reform the health care system focus on proposals that provide greater access to coverage, not less.

Once again, we strongly urge Congress to not pursue repeal of the individual mandate. As always, ACEP stands ready to work together with you to develop bipartisan solutions that work for all Americans, in pursuit of our mutual goal to maximize access to coverage, improve quality, and reduce the overall costs of care.

Sincerely,



Paul D. Kivela, MD, MBA, FACEP  
ACEP President

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