



March 21, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
United State House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

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

On behalf of the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), we are writing in opposition to the American Health Care Act (AHCA). In January, we wrote to Congress urging continued and improved access to maternity care services, providers and treatments in any health policy package that may replace the Affordable Care Act. Regretfully, the AHCA does not do that.

SMFM was established in 1977 as the medical professional society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (MFM) physicians and scientists who have additional training in the area of high-risk, complicated pregnancies. SMFM's over 2,600 members are the experts in high-risk pregnancy, gathering annually at the Pregnancy Meeting to share new clinical strategies and research.

In the United States, adverse pregnancy outcomes not only affect the baby in terms of physical and developmental disabilities, but are also a large financial burden due to costs of neonatal ICU hospitalizations and long-term specialty care. In addition, abnormal pregnancies can often produce poor outcomes for the mother in terms of chronic illness, hospital stays, severe morbidity and even death. These medical and financial burdens have been and continue to be improved with access to prenatal, labor, postpartum and infant care. While certainly far from perfect, the Affordable Care Act's passage ensured access to maternity care services for millions of women and their children.

Because the AHCA sunsets essential health benefits (EHBs), which includes maternity care, on December 31, 2018 for Medicaid enrollees, SMFM cannot support its passage. More than 50% of all births in this country are covered by Medicaid – and in some states, like Louisiana, this figure is upwards of 70%. Studies show that access to prenatal care – particularly for high-risk pregnancies at greater risk of pre-term birth and other complications that cost the U.S. billions in healthcare costs annually – vastly improves the health and wellbeing of both mothers and their children. Coverage of and access to maternity care creates the opportunity for women to be healthy before and after pregnancy and raise healthier children.

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We urge Congress to work together to ensure access and coverage for preconception, prenatal, labor and postpartum care. SMFM stands ready to provide medical expertise and advice as you develop the next phase in our healthcare system. However, at this time, we cannot support the AHCA as it is currently written. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact SMFM's Chief Advocacy Officer Katie Schubert at kschubert@smfm.org or (202) 863-2519.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred Abuhamad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being significantly larger and more prominent.

Alfred Abuhamad, MD
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt J. Granato". The signature is cursive and includes a horizontal line underneath the name.

Matt J. Granato, LL.M., MBA
Chief Executive Officer