



AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION IN CALIFORNIA
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Board of Directors

December 19, 2016

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Chair

The Honorable Jerry Brown
 Governor, State of California
 State Capitol Building
 Sacramento, CA 95814

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Dear Governor Brown:

Lynn Paquin
Executive

As the State of California provides input to Congressional leaders in Washington about the future of healthcare in the United States, the American Lung Association respectfully requests that you urge Congressional leaders to prioritize patient protections and preventive care so that ultimately the health of California’s residents improves and healthcare costs can go down.

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Lung disease is our nation’s third leading cause of death in the United States, and lung cancer is the nation’s leading cancer killer among women and men. Each year 414,000 Americans die from lung disease and another 155,610 from lung cancer. Many lung diseases can be prevented by quitting smoking, and by receiving influenza and pneumonia vaccinations as recommended. In 2015, lung cancer screening for individuals at high risk became a recommended preventive service; experts estimate that over 20,000 lives could be saved if everyone who is at high risk was screened.

Olivia Gertz
President and Chief Executive Officer

The American Lung Association recognizes that ensuring access to affordable healthcare and preventive services must be at the core of any serious plan to improve the health of Americans. Before there can be a repeal of the Affordable Care Act, Congress must pass a comprehensive healthcare law that will provide affordable and accessible care for Americans, including low-income individuals that have gained access to coverage through Medicaid expansion. Simply repealing the existing statute without such a replacement will lead to even greater instability of the insurance marketplace – likely leading to steep increases in costs and a further decrease in access to care for Americans who need it the most. This chaos will result in poor health outcomes and will translate into higher costs, which are likely to be increasingly borne by states.

Essential Provisions for Healthcare

- Further reduce the number of uninsured Americans. While over 20 million Americans have recently gained access to care, another 28.9 million remain uninsured. Future healthcare legislation must include ways to ensure that access to affordable care remains for the newly insured, as well as extend access to care to Americans who are still uninsured.
- Require coverage of preventive services. Preventive services are critical to preventing disease and detecting it early. Continued access to 'A' or 'B' preventive services with no cost-sharing and barriers will help reduce the human and economic burden caused by chronic disease. Preventing disease is the proven way to curb healthcare costs.
- No discrimination of care for Americans with pre-existing conditions. Currently, Americans with lung disease including lung cancer, asthma and COPD cannot be denied health insurance. Eliminating discrimination on pre-existing conditions literally saves lives and provides access to care for all patients. It is estimated that 52 million Americans could lose coverage if plans are allowed to deny coverage to patients with pre-existing conditions.
- Children remaining on their parents' health plans until age 26. This continuity of care is especially important for individuals with lung diseases such as asthma so they can manage their disease and prevent serious asthma exacerbations which are both life-threatening and costly.
- No lifetime caps on healthcare costs. People with lung cancer and chronic lung diseases such as COPD and asthma must be assured they will have access to care to treat and manage their diseases.
- Invest in prevention. Prevention dollars that fund programs like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Tips from Former Smokers Campaign and work to improve health at the community level reduce disease and are the cornerstone of reducing healthcare costs.
- Maximum Out of Pocket Costs. Capping annual in-network out of pocket costs protects families from financial jeopardy when they experience extraordinarily high healthcare costs. This provides certainty to patients that healthcare expenses will not lead to bankruptcy, and that they can access the care they need.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request. People with lung disease and their families are counting on you. We would welcome the opportunity to have greater discussions about this critical topic. Please contact Lindsey Freitas at lindsey.freitas@lung.org or 916.585.7674 on my staff if you have any questions about our letter.

Sincerely,



Olivia Diaz-Lapham
President and Chief Executive Officer
American Lung Association in California