



February 4, 2019

Dear Representative:

Our organizations represent millions of Utah patients and their families facing serious and chronic health conditions and are committed to ensuring they have adequate, affordable and accessible health care coverage at every stage of life. We write to express our deep concern with Senate Bill 96, "Medicaid Expansion Adjustments" and Senate Bill 97, "Medicaid Program Revisions." If passed, these policies would jeopardize access to care for thousands of Utah residents who are eligible to enroll in Medicaid coverage on April 1, 2019. Our organizations ask you to oppose SB96, SB97 and any other legislation that would restrict or repeal Medicaid expansion approved by the voters in Utah.

On November 6, 2018, more than half of all Utah voters clearly decided to expand access to healthcare in Utah. Our organizations strongly support the expansion of the Medicaid program, which will make coverage available to 150,000 low-income individuals and families. Starting April 1, 2019, individuals with incomes below 138 percent of the federal poverty level (\$28,577 for a family of three) will be eligible for Medicaid. This coverage will help patients access medications to manage chronic conditions, preventive services like cancer screenings, and many other treatments needed to stay healthy.

Expansion of the Medicaid program will also improve the financial well-being of Utah residents. An evaluation of Medicaid expansion in Ohio found that enrollees are less likely to have medical debt than their non-enrolled counterparts.¹ Additionally, Medicaid expansion has helped state economies and has been associated with a reduced risk of hospital closures, especially in rural areas.²

SB96 would reduce the benefits of Medicaid expansion by allowing the state to impose new barriers to care, such as restrictions on the number of individuals who can enroll or requirements that enrollees report that they work a certain number of hours per week to maintain their coverage. Utah voters did not approve new barriers to healthcare coverage that will leave patients and families battling administrative red tape in order to keep coverage. Additionally, the state's own fiscal analysis shows that this bill would cost the state over \$70 million in the next two years.³ SB97 would go even further by completely repealing the voters' decision to expand healthcare coverage. We urge you to respect the will of the voters and oppose both of these attacks on access to care in the Medicaid program.

Please join the undersigned organizations and oppose these and any other bills that would restrict or repeal Medicaid expansion in Utah. We urge you to instead support the implementation of Proposition 3 to allow thousands of Utah residents to access Medicaid coverage starting April 1, 2019.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society – Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
March of Dimes
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Psoriasis Foundation
Susan G. Komen
United Way Worldwide

¹ Ohio Department of Medicaid, *2018 Ohio Medicaid Group VII Assessment: Follow-Up to the 2016 Ohio Medicaid Group VIII Assessment*, August 2018. Accessed at:

<http://medicaid.ohio.gov/Portals/0/Resources/Reports/Annual/Group-VIII-Final-Report.pdf>.

² Richard Lindrooth, Marcelo Perrailon, Rose Hardy, and Gregory Tung, “Understanding the Relationship Between Medicaid Expansions and Hospital Closures,” *Health Affairs* 27, no. 1 (January 2018): pp. 111-120. Available at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.0976>.

³ Utah State Senate. *Fiscal Note S.B. 96 3rd Sub. (Ivory)*, February 2, 2019. Available at: <https://le.utah.gov/lfa/fnotes/2019/SB0096S03.fn.pdf>