

LETTER: Smith showed courage in opposing GOP health bill

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New Jersey's health-care community applauds Congressman Chris Smith, representing the 4th Congressional District, for putting his constituents over partisan politics for declaring his opposition to the American Health Care Act.

The AHCA would have jeopardized health insurance coverage for 800,000 New Jersey residents, as well as Medicaid funding that provides care for 1.8 million New Jersey residents. These programs serve a cross section of our state including senior citizens, children, the working poor and the disabled — as Smith expressed to his colleagues in the House: “The pending bill... cuts Medicaid funding...cancels essential health benefits such as maternity and newborn care, hospitalization, pediatric services and mental health and substance abuse treatment, and includes per-capita caps, all of which will likely hurt disabled persons, the elderly and the working poor. These people are in need and deserve our support.”

In a time of extreme partisanship, Smith showed courage, compassion and commitment — traits we all should value in our elected leaders. We thank him for that, on behalf of our state's health-care community and the millions of people we serve.

Elizabeth “Betsy” Ryan
Florence

Legislative
Year

Statement of Betsy Ryan, New Jersey Hospital Association President and CEO, on Passage of the American Health Care Act

NEWS PROVIDED BY

New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) →

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PRINCETON, N.J., May 4, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- "This is a very sad day for those of us committed to the health of the American people. Today, the House passed a bill that endangers the well-being of at least 24 million Americans whose health insurance is now in jeopardy.

Our hope is that the U.S. Senate will stand firm and refuse to pass a bill that impacts senior citizens, children and families, the disabled, veterans and millions of others, including 800,000 New Jersey residents who gained health insurance under the Affordable Care Act and 1.8 million who are covered under Medicaid. We implore the Senate to uphold its fiscal duty by waiting for a nonpartisan score of the bill by the Congressional Budget Office. We thank New Jersey's Sens. Bob Menendez and Cory Booker for putting their constituents first and expressing their opposition to the American Health Care Act.

There is one bright spot, however, for the people of New Jersey. We can be very proud of the members of our congressional delegation who showed the courage to stand up against political pressure and vote "No" on the American Health Care Act. We applaud them: Donald Norcross (D-1), Frank LoBiondo (R-2), Chris Smith (R-4), Josh Gottheimer (D-5), Frank Pallone (D-6), Leonard Lance (R-7), Albio Sires (D-8), Bill Pascrell (D-9), Donald Payne (D-10) and Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-12)."

SOURCE New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA)