

AHCA Threatens the Health of Fathers in Ohio

This Father's Day, we reflect on the critical role fathers have in shaping the lives of children and contributing to the economic security of Ohio families. We celebrate the important gains the Affordable Care Act (ACA) provided in closing the coverage gap for parents. The ACA allowed states to adopt Medicaid Expansion to provide coverage for low income nonelderly, nondisabled adults with incomes at or below 138 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).¹ The American Health Care Act (AHCA), passed by House Republicans on May 4, 2017 and soon to be considered by the Senate, repeals the ACA's Medicaid Expansion for fathers and other adults and cuts federal Medicaid spending by \$834 billion over ten years.² The AHCA guts Medicaid coverage for low income Ohio fathers and jeopardizes the economic security of Ohio families.

Medicaid Expansion Reduced the Coverage Gap for Ohio Parents

Under the ACA, 723,000 Ohioans up to 138 percent FPL have enrolled in Medicaid Expansion.³ Before the ACA, Medicaid coverage for Ohio parents was restricted to individuals at or below 90 percent FPL.⁴ Consequently, the uninsurance rate of Ohio parents dropped from 10.3 to 6.5 percent.⁵ Many hard working Ohio parents, from restaurant workers to home health attendants and construction workers who do not have access to employer-sponsored insurance gained coverage under Medicaid Expansion.⁶ The benefits redound not only to the parents covered but to their children as well - parents receiving health insurance serves as a "welcome mat" to increase coverage for children.⁷ Providing parents with Medicaid also improves the health and well-being of children, as uninsured parents have difficulty accessing needed care, potentially compromising their ability to work, support their families and care for their children.⁸ If the ACA is repealed, coverage for many low-income Ohio fathers will be stripped away and many Ohio children will likely wind up losing health coverage too.

The Affordable Health Care Increased Access to Affordable Care for Ohio Fathers

The ACA increased access to care, including primary and preventive care. In Ohio, access to care was improved for 64.3 percent of Medicaid enrollees, including access to services for mental health and substance use disorders.⁹ The ACA also made health care affordable by requiring private health plans to provide coverage of preventive services without cost-sharing. Affordability protections are particularly important because nationally, thirty-one percent of men below 200 percent FPL have put off or postponed preventive services due to cost.¹⁰ In Ohio, Medicaid enrollees have had increased access to affordable care under the ACA and as a result, experience less anxiety about access to services and ability to pay medical bills.¹¹

Medicaid Expansion Improved Financial Security of the Ohio Family

Medicaid Expansion, coupled with the ACA's affordability protections, leaves more money in each enrolled Ohio family's wallet to pay for other basic needs. In Ohio, 22.9 percent of Medicaid Expansion enrollees indicated their financial situation improved and 58.6 percent stated their Medicaid coverage made it easier to purchase food.¹² Over 52 percent of enrollees stated that attaining health coverage made it easier to secure and maintain employment and over half of expansion enrollees who were employed reported that Medicaid enrollment made it easier to continue working.¹³ Medicaid Expansion ensures that Ohio fathers do not have to choose between putting food on their family's table and receiving medical care.

So as we celebrate our fathers this Sunday, let's make sure we don't lose their ability to have comprehensive, affordable health insurance to maintain their health!

¹42 C.F.R. §435.603(e); 42 U.S.C. §1396a(e)(14)

² Cong. Budget Office, Cost Estimate: American Health Care Act 13 (May 24, 2017), <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/115th-congress-2017-2018/costestimate/hr1628aspassed.pdf>

³ Health Pol'y Inst. of Ohio, Ohio Medicaid Basics 2017 2 (2017), http://www.healthpolicyohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/MedicaidBasics_2017_ExecutiveSummary_Web.pdf

⁴ 51 Ohio Rev. Code §5163.07; Kaiser Family Found., Medicaid Eligibility for Adults as of January 1, 2014 (2013), <http://www.kff.org/medicaid/fact-sheet/medicaid-eligibility-for-adults-as-of-january-1-2014/>

⁵ Genevieve M. Kenney et al., Urban Institute, Medicaid/CHIP Participation Rates Rose among Children and Parents in 2015 18 (2017), http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/90346/2001264-medicare-chip-participation-rates-rose-among-children-and-parents-in-2015_1.pdf

⁶ Wendy Pattron, Pol'y Matters Ohio, Repeal of Health Law Threatens Ohioans 1 (2017), <https://www.policymattersohio.org/files/research/ohio-medicare-january-2017-es-2.pdf>

⁷ Tricia Brooks, Georgetown Ctr. for Children & Families, *Say Ahhh!*, How the AHCA Yanks Welcome Mat Out From Under Children Eligible for Medicaid and CHIP (2017), <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2017/03/14/how-the-ahca-yanks-welcome-mat-out-from-under-children-eligible-for-medicare-and-chip/>

⁸ Martha Heberlein et al., Georgetown Ctr. for Children & Families, Medicaid Coverage for Parents under the Affordable Care Act 1 (2012), <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Medicare-Coverage-for-Parents1.pdf>

⁹ Loren Anthes, The Return on Investment of Medicaid Expansion: Supporting Work and Health in Rural Ohio, Georgetown Ctr. for Children & Families: "Say Ahhh!" (Jan. 10, 2017), <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2017/01/10/the-return-on-investment-of-medicare-expansion-supporting-work-and-health-in-rural-ohio/>

¹⁰ Kaiser Family Found., Preventive Services Covered by Private Health Plans Under the Affordable Care Act (2015), <http://www.kff.org/health-reform/fact-sheet/preventive-services-covered-by-private-health-plans/>

¹¹ Anthes, *supra* note 9.

¹² Anthes, *supra* note 9.

¹³ Anthes, *supra* note 9.