



COMMITTEE ON  
**ENERGY & COMMERCE**  
**DEMOCRATS**  
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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## **First Bills Marked-Up by E&C in 115<sup>th</sup> “Chip Away” at Medicaid**

*“I cannot support policies that limit eligibility and delay coverage and do not strengthen the Medicaid program for beneficiaries.”*

**Washington, D.C.** – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) denounced Republican efforts to “strengthen” Medicaid by removing or excluding certain people from Medicaid at a Health Subcommittee markup today:*

Thank you Mr. Chairman. My opinion on both pieces of legislation has not changed from last week: I cannot support policies that limit eligibility and delay coverage and do not strengthen the Medicaid program for beneficiaries. Medicaid is simply too important for too many people—these bills merely chip away at the program around its edges, making no meaningful improvements.

In 2016, over 97 million Americans depended on Medicaid at some point during the year. That’s our nation’s kids, the disabled, our seniors and hardworking Americans who simply need this safety net to make life better for their families. It is undeniable that Medicaid coverage pays us back as a society tenfold—that’s why we must improve and strengthen Medicaid’s coverage provisions not kick people off in the name of integrity.

My Republican colleagues say they are strengthening Medicaid, but that’s simply not the case. After all, they remain committed to repealing the Affordable Care Act’s Medicaid expansion provisions – taking health care away from millions and shifting trillions of dollars onto our states by gutting the financing structure of the program.

H.R. 181 would count half of the income that a spouse receives from an annuity as income for purposes of the other spouse’s eligibility for Medicaid long-term care. Now, while there may be some examples of extremely wealthy individuals using annuities in their spouse’s name to shield income, the reality is that rather than hitting the wealthiest among us, this bill would most likely impact the financial security of hard working spouses. Moreover, we currently have no long-term care insurance in this country. And until we are ready to have a discussion about improving options in the long term care insurance marketplace, I am

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concerned about any changes to Medicaid eligibility that would make it harder for working class people to access the care they need.

H.R. 829 would limit Medicaid coverage for people that receive a one-time lump sum payment of \$80,000 or more for anywhere from two months to ten years. Despite what Republicans say, this is not a bill about lottery winners, and millionaires. If Republicans truly wanted to kick millionaires off of Medicaid – none of which actually exist – this bill would look very different.

My Republican colleagues say they are strengthening Medicaid by removing or excluding certain people from the program, claiming that it will allow for more resources to go towards others. This is a meaningless approach to resource management. There is no evidence to suggest that some beneficiaries take away resources from others, or that excluding some beneficiaries will benefit others, and these bills do not invest any savings from these policies back into the program in a meaningful way.

In order to truly strengthen the Medicaid program, we should expand coverage, protect against fraud, and implement advanced delivery system reform. I'd like to remind my colleagues that the Affordable Care Act did just that. If Republicans want to strengthen the Medicaid program, I stand ready to build on those efforts, but I will not support policies that simply chip away at the coverage millions depend on.

I yield back.

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