



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 1, 2017

CONTACT
[CJ Young](#) — (202) 225-5735

GOP Medicaid Plans Deny Health Care to Most Vulnerable

“Medicaid has always been under attack by Republicans, but the threat to this program and to its beneficiaries is more dangerous than ever before.”

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) defended the importance of Medicaid today at a Health Subcommittee hearing titled, “Strengthening Medicaid and Prioritizing the Most Vulnerable”:*

Since 1965, the Medicaid program has been an invaluable resource to poor families, pregnant women, children, seniors, and now, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, low-income working adults. It is also the program that individuals with disabilities depend on to maintain independence in the community.

In 2016, over 97 million Americans depended on Medicaid at some point during the year. Together, Medicaid and CHIP cover 1 in 3 children in this country, and nearly half of all births. It is undeniable that Medicaid coverage pays us back as a society tenfold—that’s why improving and strengthening Medicaid for generations to come continues to be one of my primary goals.

Last Congress, this Committee worked together on targeted policies that genuinely strengthened and improved the Medicaid program for beneficiaries. Unfortunately, the bills before us today do not share these priorities. In fact, one piece of legislation continues the Trump Administration’s assault against our legal permanent resident population and naturalized citizens.

The Republican strategy to strengthen Medicaid is to remove or exclude certain people from the program and then apply those resources to another person. 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.

In today’s hearing we will discuss three bills that are based on this very falsehood, bills that target specific beneficiaries for exclusion. Bills that ultimately incentivize and reward those states that choose to operate waiting lists for Home and Community Based Services.

In order to truly strengthen the Medicaid program, we should expand coverage, protect against fraud, and implement advanced delivery system reform. The Affordable Care Act did just that. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 31 states and the District of Columbia have adopted expansion and dramatically lowered the uninsured rate. All 50 states are testing innovative models of care, and Medicaid eligibility and data collection systems have been modernized.

Medicaid has always been under attack by Republicans, but the threat to this program and to its beneficiaries is more dangerous than ever before. Republican policies to cap or turn the program into a block grant would result in the rug being pulled out from under millions of children, elderly, individuals with disabilities and low-income working adults. These policies are nothing but bad for our providers and our state economies. In fact, one analysis by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that block granting Medicaid would lead states to drop between 14.3 million and 20.5 million people from Medicaid, an enrollment decline of 25 to 35 percent, and would lead states to cut provider reimbursements by more than 30 percent.

Republicans keep saying that they have a plan – and that Americans will not lose their health coverage. It's clear today, that the Republicans only game plan right now is to sabotage health coverage for tens of millions of Americans.

I yield back.

###
