



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE  
1156 15<sup>TH</sup> STREET, NW SUITE 915 · WASHINGTON, DC 20005 · P (202) 463-2940 · F (202) 463-2953  
E-MAIL: [WASHINGTONBUREAU@NAACPNET.ORG](mailto:WASHINGTONBUREAU@NAACPNET.ORG) · WEB ADDRESS [WWW.NAACP.ORG](http://WWW.NAACP.ORG)

## ISSUE UPDATE



**DATE:** March 28, 2017  
**TO:** Concerned Parties  
**FROM:** Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

### **NAACP–OPPOSED LEGISLATION TO “REPEAL AND REPLACE” THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT IS DEFEATED FOR NOW** *LEGISLATION WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN 24 MILLION FEWER AMERICANS HAVING HEALTH CARE COVERAGE*

#### **THE ISSUE**

On Friday, March 24, 2017, the so-called “American Health Care Act” (AHCA), the proposal being promoted heavily by House Speaker Paul Ryan and President Donald Trump was officially pulled from consideration by the Congress, thus handing a defeat to those who called for the repeal the Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. “the ACA,” or “Obamacare”). The legislation, which was touted as the “repeal and replace” bill would have decimated health care coverage, returning many of us to where we were before the enactment of the ACA, or worse. By pulling the bill from consideration, a move that was undertaken after it became clear that there were not enough votes to support passage of the bill in the House of Representatives, the proposal is now dead for the foreseeable future. As Speaker Ryan said in his post-mortem press conference, “Obamacare (the ACA) is the law of the land.” He has since vowed to continue to attempt to repeal and replace the ACA.

The “American Health Care Act” would have been particularly bad for African Americans. Under the ACA, the uninsured rate for African American adults was cut by almost half between 2010 and 2015, from 27 percent uninsured to 14.5 percent uninsured. Furthermore, thanks to the ACA, the inequity in uninsured rates for African American and White children was completely eliminated. For the first time in history, a Black child is no longer more likely to be uninsured than a White child. Yet, despite promises that the plan would include “insurance for everybody . . . [that is] much less expensive and much better,” there are currently 5 million African Americans in insurance plans that they or their families purchase on their own who could lose that coverage or face dramatic increases in their out of pocket costs if the AHCA should pass. Moreover, changes to the Medicaid program which were contained in the AHCA would have put almost 14 million African Americans at risk of losing Medicaid benefits or losing Medicaid coverage entirely.

The AHCA also eliminated the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which was created by the ACA and is the nation’s first mandatory funding stream dedicated to improving the health of all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or station in life. This program supports a wide variety of public health services and prevention activities, and has already proven effective in addressing a number of health challenges which disproportionately impact the African American community, including fighting obesity, curbing tobacco use and increasing access to preventative care services.

With the defeat of the AHCA, Congress and the Administration should now work together to improve on the progress which has already been made under the ACA. The American people deserve nothing less.

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