

Defending Health Care in 2017: What's at Stake for the District of Columbia

With a new president and Congress, the health care gains made throughout the last six years face their greatest threat yet. Congress has voted more than 60 times to roll back the historic progress that has been made to expand health coverage to millions of people in this country and to improve coverage for those who already had it. These proposed changes will put the health—and lives—of countless District of Columbia residents at risk. Here's what the District of Columbia stands to lose if the new president and Congress move forward to upend our health care system:

Tens of thousands of District of Columbia residents stand to lose health coverage

32,000 District of Columbia residents stand to lose their health coverage.¹

The District of Columbia stands to lose **\$2 billion** in federal funding for Medicaid, CHIP, and financial assistance for marketplace coverage.²

Approximately **1,000** District of Columbia residents who currently get financial assistance to help pay for their health coverage will lose this help and will no longer have affordable coverage options. In 2016, District of Columbia residents receiving financial assistance saw their monthly premiums reduced on average **\$183** thanks to this help.³

The now-historically low rate of uninsured people will spike, with the number of uninsured in the District of Columbia increasing **103 percent** by 2019.⁴ This will reverse the immense progress that has been made to expand coverage. Between 2013 and 2015:

- » The number of uninsured in the District of Columbia declined **43 percent**.⁵
- » Working District of Columbia residents: The uninsured rate among working District of Columbia residents saw a **42 percent** decline.⁶

Repeal will end the District of Columbia's Medicaid expansion and cause ripple effects across the District of Columbia's economy

62,000 people stand to lose health coverage, most of whom are working.⁷ The Medicaid expansion has extended health coverage to lower-income District of Columbia residents who hold down jobs that are the backbone of the District of Columbia's economy—from fast food workers to home care attendants to construction workers to cashiers. Repeal will leave these hard working District of Columbia residents out in the cold.

The District of Columbia will lose hundreds of millions in federal Medicaid funding. Over the course of a year and a half alone, Medicaid expansion brought **\$464 million** in federal dollars into the District of Columbia's economy.⁸ The impact of that lost federal Medicaid funding will have a ripple effect throughout the economy, affecting hospitals, other health care providers, and businesses.

Millions of dollars in budget relief lost. By providing health coverage to more residents, the Medicaid expansion has meant that the District of Columbia has been able to reduce its health care spending on programs like district-funded programs for the uninsured. **That's \$41 million in budget relief in fiscal year 2015.**⁹ These funds can be reinvested in other priorities like infrastructure and education. Repeal will put these costs squarely back on the District of Columbia.

District of Columbia residents with private health insurance will be stripped of vital protections against discrimination

Approximately **268,000** District of Columbia residents with pre-existing conditions like asthma, diabetes, and cancer could once again be denied affordable, comprehensive coverage that actually covers their health care needs.¹⁰

Women in the District of Columbia will once again be charged more for health coverage just for being a woman.

- » Prior to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), women in the District of Columbia were charged as much as **32 percent** more than men for the same coverage.¹¹

District of Columbia residents will once again face a world where insurance plans routinely cap the most they will pay for someone's health care in a year and in their lifetime, effectively cutting off coverage for the sickest individuals when they most need it.

- » Roughly **208,000** District of Columbia residents (including **34,000** children) saw lifetime limits on coverage disappear thanks to the ACA's ban on these practices.¹²

Hundreds of thousands of District of Columbia residents will lose guaranteed coverage of free preventive services, like recommended cancer screenings and vaccines

Approximately **281,000** District of Columbia residents with private health coverage (including **39,000** children) and **88,000** District of Columbia seniors on Medicare will lose guaranteed access to free preventive care, like blood pressure screenings, immunizations, and cancer screenings.^{13, 14}

Insurance companies will no longer be required to put the District of Columbia residents' premiums toward care, not profits

Insurers will no longer be held accountable for using people's premium dollars on care and quality improvement or paying back the difference.

- » District of Columbia residents have received around **\$49.2 million** in refunds from plans that overcharged for premiums since the ACA took effect.¹⁵

Thousands of seniors and people with disabilities will lose comprehensive drug coverage

The Medicare donut hole will re-open. This will leave District of Columbia seniors and people with disabilities with a gap in prescription drug coverage and forced to pay thousands of dollars more in drug costs.

- » Seniors and people with disabilities in the District of Columbia have saved **approximately \$13 million** on drug costs thanks to the ACA's closing the Medicare donut hole.¹⁶
- » In 2015 alone, approximately **3,000** seniors and people with disabilities in the District of Columbia saved on average **\$1,073** on drug costs.¹⁷