



January 12, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to urge Congress to take immediate action to reauthorize several essential health care programs and address other ACP priorities. ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician group in the United States, representing 152,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

Specifically, we urge Congress to:

- **Reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for at least 5 years:** The Continuing Resolution (CR) passed on December 22, 2017, provides funding for CHIP only until March 31, 2018. This stopgap measure only gave states a temporary lifeline to continue to provide health coverage to qualified children in their states, yet without immediate action to reauthorize CHIP, several states will run out of CHIP money as early as January 19th. As a result, nearly 9 million children are at risk of losing coverage.
- **Reauthorize funding for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), Community Health Centers (CHCs), and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program, for at least two years.** Because these programs are funded only until March 31, 2018, they have not had the long-term stability and necessary planning capacity needed to meet their missions of training physicians in primary care and ensuring access to primary care services in underserved communities.

- **Fund Title VII health professions training, programs and initiatives to combat the opioid crisis, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) for fiscal year 2018 and raise the Budget Control Act (BCA) caps for defense and non-defense spending on an equal basis, before the current continuing resolution expires on January 19th.** Without appropriations for the full fiscal year, these programs cannot start any new initiatives or projects that were not already in law. Also, fiscal year 2018 spending remains subject to the “sequester” caps of the BCA for both defense discretionary and non-defense discretionary spending; as long as these caps remain in place, these programs may not get the funding required for them to be as effective as possible.
- **Enact legislation to provide permanent legal status, including a pathway to citizenship, for “Dreamers”:** Termination of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) would deny the United States the talents of more than half a million individuals, including Dreamers enrolled in U.S. medical schools and physician residency training programs. While a federal judge recently put a temporary halt to the administration’s decision to discontinue DACA, this does not provide Dreamers with the necessary assurance that they will be allowed to continue to work and study in the United States without fear of deportation. Only Congress can provide such certainty needed through legislation.
- **Enact legislation to stabilize the individual insurance market sufficiently in advance to influence insurers’ decisions on the initial rates to be filed this spring, and whether they even will offer products in the individual market.** The recently-enacted Tax Cuts and Jobs Act discontinued the requirement that individuals have health insurance (individual insurance mandate). According to the Congressional Budget Office, this will likely cause premiums to go up by 10 percent or more starting with the 2019 enrollment cycle, and as many as 13 million to lose coverage. These premium increases would be on top of the premium increases that have resulted from the administration’s discontinuation of cost-sharing reduction payments to health plans.

In conclusion, ACP urges you to reach bipartisan agreement on legislation to reauthorize and fund CHIP and other essential health programs; fund primary care training, opioid crisis programs, and health services research; provide permanent legal status and citizenship to Dreamers, and stabilize the insurance markets. Please let us know how we can assist you in achieving this.

Sincerely,



Jack Ende, MD, MACP  
President

CC: Members of the United States Senate and United States House of Representatives