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## **UHCAN Ohio: Affordable Care Act Repeal Threatens 50% of State's Funds Helping Ohioans Battling Opioid Addiction**

*If Congress repeals healthcare, more than 220,000 Ohioans in need of critical mental health services will lose access to care*

*Study shows repealing Affordable Care Act would have stark effects on doctors' ability to address the opioid epidemic*

Jan. 11, 2017 – Today UHCAN Ohio highlighted a new Harvard Medical School and New York University [study](#) showing that repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would have tragic consequences for millions of Americans affected by mental illness and the devastating opioid epidemic. **[220,512 Ohioans suffering from mental illness or substance use disorder will lose access to critical mental health services made available by the ACA.](#)** Ohio ranks among the highest in the nation in opioid overdose-related deaths and prescribing rates. Nationwide, the study estimates that **more than 4 million Americans** with serious mental illness or a substance use disorder, of whom about 222,000 have an opioid disorder, would lose some or all of their insurance coverage.

In addition to these findings, the Ohio Medicaid Group VIII Assessment, a report recently released by the Ohio Department of Medicaid, found that among Ohioans who are covered by the expansion of Medicaid, those with opioid use disorders reported that both access to mental health care and overall access to care improved after enrolling in Medicaid. Without expanded Medicaid, those Ohioans with opioid use disorders, as well as the rest of the 702,000 Ohioans covered by expanded Medicaid, would lose access to care.

“These findings overwhelmingly show the impact of the ACA and Medicaid expansion on the health and lives of Ohioans,” said Steve Wagner, Executive Director of Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio. “The opioid epidemic is devastating families throughout Ohio. Mothers, fathers, and children are losing their lives to addiction. Congress’s plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act without a replacement would leave them in the cold, without access to the treatment they need.”

“As Congress discusses the future of health care in our country, it’s important to ensure that everyone has access to the care they need to stay healthy. The critical health care and rights made available by the ACA must be maintained so that the gains we’ve seen don’t go away and we can continue to build a healthy Ohio,” said Wagner.

The analysis also highlights the important progress made recently when Congress passed the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act with bipartisan support, which provides additional funding to increase treatment capacity for opioid abuse and addiction nationwide. Repealing the ACA, however, would wipe out that progress and withdraw \$5.5 billion each year from the treatment of people with substance use and behavioral health disorders. As the nation faces a growing opioid abuse epidemic, Congress must protect critical funding and resources that help millions of Americans, and hundreds of thousands of Ohioans, get the care they desperately need.

- **Ohio relies on Medicaid for nearly 50% of evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) using buprenorphine.**
- **Ohio had 3,310 drug overdose deaths and a mortality rate of 29.9 per 100,000 people** (CDC 2015 data).
- **Ohio filled 829 opioid prescriptions per 1000 population.** [[Harvard Medical School](#)]

#### **WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR OHIOANS?**

- **220,512 Ohioans** suffering from mental illness or substance use disorder will lose access to critical mental health services.
- **964,000 Ohioans** would lose health coverage, **a 155 percent increase** in the number of uninsured. [[Urban Institute](#)]
- Ohioans would lose **\$5.842 billion** in federal financial assistance through the insurance marketplaces from 2019-2028, leading to a dramatic spike in the number of uninsured. [[Urban Institute](#)]
- **174,448 Ohioans** would lose an average monthly advanced premium tax credit of **\$250** which currently helps them pay for insurance. [[Kaiser Family Foundation](#)]
- Ohio would lose **\$42.18 billion** in federal Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) funding, currently providing lifelines to **3,003,170 Ohioans.** [[Urban Institute](#), [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)]

#### **AMERICANS BELIEVE IT IS WRONG TO REPEAL THE ACA WITHOUT A SIMULTANEOUS REPLACEMENT**

**A significant majority of Americans overwhelmingly think it is reckless to repeal the Affordable Care Act without a plan to replace it** [[Hart Research](#)]:

- 72 percent of Americans agree with the statement: "Before tearing anything down, Congress should show us their plan to replace our healthcare."
- 60 percent of voters agree with the statement "It is wrong for Congress to repeal Obamacare before it tells us specifically what its plan is to replace it," and reject

the argument that, “it is important to commit now to repealing Obamacare, and two years is enough time to determine the best replacement plan.”

- 62 percent of Americans have little or no confidence that Congress will ever pass a good replacement plan in the wake of repeal.

**Only a small minority of Americans want to repeal the Affordable Care Act.** A mere 26 percent of Americans support repealing the Affordable Care Act—even less than the 30 percent of the public who want to see the law expanded. [[Kaiser Family Foundation](#)]

**Republican and Democratic Governors from across the country agree there should be no repeal of the Affordable Care Act without a replacement.** There is an emerging "strong bipartisan consensus" from the National Governors Association that federal funding for the states should remain in place as Congress considers ACA replacement. [[Politico Pro](#)]

*UHCAN Ohio is a statewide non-partisan, non-profit organization building the voice of consumers to achieve quality, affordable, accessible health coverage for all Ohioans. [www.uhcanohio.org](http://www.uhcanohio.org)*

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