

Draft Senate Republican Bill to Replace the Affordable Care Act Leaves Americans Worse Off

Republicans in the U.S. Senate today released the Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017 (BCRA). This bill was touted as a replacement to the U.S. House-passed American Health Care Act Of 2017 (AHCA). The BCRA was crafted behind closed doors by a select group of Republican senators over the past several weeks.

The Senate’s BCRA maintains many of the House’s AHCA provisions; some Senate BCRA provisions go even further at eroding the American health care system. The Senate BCRA eliminates Medicaid expansion, reduces Medicaid eligibility, and allows states to impose work requirements for certain Medicaid recipients. The Senate BCRA reduces eligibility for premium tax credits to purchase individual insurance, eliminates critical cost-sharing reductions for co-pays and deductibles, and significantly increases premium costs for low- and middle-income seniors. The Senate BCRA weakens consumer protections and makes it easier for states to deny coverage to individuals with pre-existing conditions. The Senate BCRA eliminates funding for the Public Health and Prevention Fund, which pays for crucial preventive and other public health services. The list goes on.

As with the House’s American Health Care Act, the American Nurses Association (ANA) stands in firm opposition to the Senate’s Better Care Reconciliation Act. This bill goes against [ANA’s core principles for health system transformation](#). It reduces access to a standard package of essential health care services for all citizens and residents; it reduces the ability of individuals to acquire primary, community-based preventive services and will drive up the cost of health care; it reduces the ability of individuals to utilize health care services in an economic way; and it says nothing of ensuring a sufficient supply of a skilled workforce necessary to providing quality health care services to all citizens and residents.

Side-by-Side Comparison of ANA Principles, the American Health Care Act of 2017, and the Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017

ANA Principles	American Health Care Act of 2017	Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017
Ensure universal access to standard package of essential healthcare services for all citizens and residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeals Medicaid Expansion. Leaves states to decide essential health benefits while allowing them to create high risk pools for people with pre-existing conditions. Gives tax credits based on age rather than income. Denies coverage of some women’s reproductive health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeals Medicaid Expansion and allows work requirements for certain individuals. Encourages states to decide essential health benefits, create high risk pools for people with pre-existing conditions, and weakens consumer protections. Gives tax credits based on both age and income. Denies coverage of some women’s reproductive health services and defunds Planned Parenthood for one year.

Side-by-Side Comparison of ANA Principles, the American Health Care Act of 2017, and the Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017		
ANA Principles	American Health Care Act of 2017	Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017
Optimize primary, community based preventive services while supporting the cost effective use of innovative, technology driven acute hospital based services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses tax code to discourage use of high cost health services particularly those available through employer based plans. • Eliminates funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund within the ACA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses tax code to discourage use of high cost health services particularly those available through employer based plans. • Eliminates funding after FY 2017 for the Prevention and Public Health Fund within the ACA and adds one-time, supplemental funding increases for both the Community Health Center Program and to combat the opioid abuse and mental health crises.
Ensure mechanisms to stimulate economic use of health care services while supporting those who do not have the means to share in costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeals taxes on a wide range of providers and services intended to fund the purchase of affordable healthcare and incentivize healthcare. • Increases reliance on HSAs to fund health insurance and medical out-of-pocket expenses. • Forces states to operate individual and small group insurance markets using flat rate federal grant money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates cost-sharing reductions which allow low-income individuals to purchase basic and preventive healthcare services. • Repeals taxes on a wide range of providers and services intended to fund the purchase of affordable healthcare and incentivize healthcare. • Increases reliance on HSAs to fund health insurance and medical out-of-pocket expenses. • Forces states to operate individual and small group insurance markets using flat rate federal grant money.
Ensure sufficient supply of a skilled workforce to providing high quality healthcare services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides no details on issues of healthcare work force development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides no details on issues of healthcare work force development.

^[1] The funding allocations for the Prevention and Public Health Fund for FY 2017 can be found [here](#).