



DiabetesSisters Statement on the American Healthcare Act (AHCA)

On May 4, 2017, the US House of Representatives passed [its latest version of House Resolution 1628](#): the American Health Care Act (AHCA), to repeal and replace the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). The measure passed by a slim margin of 217 – 213. It now waits for the Senate to review and amend, or start over completely with its own proposal.

The newest version of the AHCA could have catastrophic effects for women with diabetes, from neither fixing current problems with the ACA, to turning back the clock for people with pre-existing conditions and eliminating state expansion of Medicaid.

Projections from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office say nearly 24 million Americans including women with diabetes or prediabetes could lose healthcare coverage by 2026, under the original AHCA. Medicaid would also be cut by \$839 billion over 10 years, hurting the 58% of current Medicaid enrollees who are women, many of whom have diabetes.

The AHCA would allow insurers to charge significantly higher premiums for people with pre-existing conditions, and possibly allow insurers to charge older adults even higher premiums. People with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes could find themselves in [state high-risk pools](#) where premiums could cost as much as 5 times more than current rates. Another potential concern is annual or lifetime caps on reimbursement for diabetes (and other chronic disease) care.

The AHCA would also allow states to opt out of requiring health plans to cover 10 essential health benefits currently included in the ACA, such as: ambulatory patient services; emergency services; hospitalization; maternity and newborn care; mental health and substance use disorder services; prescription drugs; rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices; laboratory services; and preventive and wellness services and chronic disease management.

The people

More than 15 million women in the US currently live with diabetes. They face unique challenges to stable, in-range blood sugar due to women's health concerns such as menses, menopause, and/or pregnancy. For reasons not yet fully understood, women with diabetes also face increased health risks with heart disease, depression, eating disorders, osteoporosis, and ketoacidosis, and with higher levels of loneliness and isolation. These specific health concerns are worsened when women with diabetes cannot access or afford health care coverage.

The need

DiabetesSisters stands in support of all women living with any type of diabetes or prediabetes and a clear path to access quality, comprehensive, affordable health care services and treatment for them, including: insulin, oral medications, and equipment/devices; primary care and specialist physicians,

DiabetesSisters

certified diabetes educators, diabetes education programs, dietitians/nutritionists, mental health care providers, and pregnancy and newborn care, among others.

How to engage

To contact legislators about the AHCA and other diabetes-related legislation, the Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition (DPAC) has just released a new app (available for both Android and iPhone). Just search "DPAC" in the app store, download, and communicate with your elected representatives at federal and state levels.

About DiabetesSisters

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, DiabetesSisters is the only organization nationwide focusing exclusively on women living with diabetes. Our mission is to improve the health and quality of life of women living with and at risk of developing diabetes and to advocate on their behalf. DiabetesSisters has a 13,000-member peer network that unites women with diabetes for the purpose of support, education, and advocacy. Signature programs include monthly peer support meetings (PODS Meetups); the Life Class Webinar Series and online blogs, forums, and expert resources; and conferences throughout the US. For more information, visit <http://www.diabetessisters.org>.