

What They're Saying: House Passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Enhancement Act

Yesterday, House Democrats passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Enhancement Act, which will benefit over 17 million Americans by expanding coverage and bringing down health care costs. News coverage and blog posts highlighted the stark contrast between House Democrats delivering on our pledge to strengthen and enhance the Affordable Care Act and Republican efforts to strike down the ACA in the courts and eliminate protections for Americans with pre-existing conditions:

[Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Blog: House Bill Would Help Millions Get Health Coverage, Cut Costs for Millions More](#)

“The House is expected to vote today on a bill that would lead 4 million people to gain health coverage, **the Congressional Budget Office estimates, while making coverage more affordable for at least 13 million more, likely benefiting well over 17 million people in total.** The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Enhancement Act would strengthen both the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces and Medicaid. These improvements are especially important given that millions of people have likely lost job-based health insurance in recent weeks due to the deep economic downturn, many of whom will become uninsured if they lack access to these programs... These improvements would benefit over 10 million people who already buy marketplace or other ACA coverage (including 8.9 million people who already qualify for premium tax credits and at least 1.3 million who'd be newly eligible) and provide more affordable options to millions of people now uninsured... Other parts of the bill would also expand access to marketplace coverage or make it more affordable...” [June 29, 2020]

[The Hill: House fires back at Trump by passing ObamaCare expansion](#)

“**The House on Monday passed a bill to expand the Affordable Care Act (ACA)** as Democrats seek to hammer President Trump and Republicans on health care heading into the November elections. The legislation, which passed in a largely party-line vote of 234 to 179, would increase the 2010 health law's subsidies that help people afford their premiums and add more federal funding for Medicaid expansion. **Democrats timed the vote to contrast with the Trump administration's legal brief filed with the Supreme Court last week calling for the ACA to be struck down, a move Democrats said would be even more harmful during the coronavirus pandemic.**” [June 29, 2020]

[Washington Post: House Democrats push through first bill in a decade expanding Affordable Care Act](#)

“**The House Monday passed the first significant expansion of the Affordable Care Act since its birth a decade ago, providing Democrats a high-wattage platform to castigate President Trump for his efforts to overturn the landmark law during a pandemic and an election year...** Historically, Democrats engender greater public trust than Republicans on their handling of the issue, and arguments that the GOP sought to deprive consumers of health care helped Democrats take the House majority two years ago... **Monday's vote symbolized that House Democrats have a path to make health insurance and treatment more accessible** at a moment when the novel coronavirus —

Office the Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, 06/30/20

and the jobs the pandemic has cost — has strained the U.S. health system, robbed millions of Americans of health benefits and caused nearly 125,000 deaths nationwide... The legislation would add to some of the ACA’s central elements by expanding eligibility for insurance subsidies to those at higher incomes and pressuring more than a dozen states to expand Medicaid. It also would blunt some of the ways the Trump administration has watered down the law... **Three years after a Republican Congress failed to pass a series of ACA repeal plans, House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.) accused Republicans of producing no substitute for the ACA...** [June 29,2020]

[Politico: House Democrats approve health bill, seeking contrast with Trump’s Obamacare assault](#)

“House Democrats on Monday approved a major expansion of Obamacare, underscoring the health care law’s central role in their campaign pitch and drawing sharp contrast with President Donald Trump’s efforts to eliminate the entire law... Health care continues to top the polling of voter concerns in swing districts, according to the party’s House campaign arm... The pandemic and the resulting economic crisis are testing Obamacare’s role as a safety net in a health system based around employer-sponsored health insurance. It’s still unclear how many people who have lost their jobs because of pandemic-related shutdowns have switched to Obamacare coverage.“

“Hundreds of thousands of Americans have purchased health plans on the ACA marketplaces in recent months, fewer than analysts originally projected. Millions more are likely to become eligible for Medicaid, particularly in states that expanded their programs under the health care law. Trump has faced criticism from Democrats, as well as some moderate Republicans, for doing little to promote the law's coverage options during the pandemic.” [June 29, 2020]

[Roll Call: House Democrats to consider measure to strengthen Obamacare](#)

“House Democrats on Monday released legislation to bolster the 2010 health care law, which the Rules Committee plans to consider this week... New provisions are being incorporated into a bill to provide funds for states to set up reinsurance programs for the exchanges set up by the 2010 law. The Energy and Commerce Committee approved that bill last year. The Rules Committee will meet Wednesday to approve a rule, which may not allow amendments, for the new version... The bill would also rescind regulations the Trump administration put forward to allow for short-term health insurance plans to be more available. It would revoke an administration guidance for states to allow them more flexibility to seek waivers for their insurance marketplaces...”

“The measure would also seek to encourage states to expand Medicaid eligibility by enhancing federal payments to provide the same benefits that states that expanded initially under the health care law enjoyed in 2014, 2015 and 2016. It would also reduce the amount of federal payments for certain administrative costs to states that don’t expand eligibility and would increase reporting requirements for those states. More than a dozen states have not expanded Medicaid, while some are in the process of implementing expansion... **The vote on the House measure will come around the same time as the Trump administration and Republican attorneys general seeking to overturn the health care law are set to file their opening briefs to the Supreme Court in Texas v. California.** Those states are set to file their opening briefs on Friday.” [June 29, 2020]