



The Honorable Kevin Yoder
U.S. House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Yoder:

As Congress begins its new year of work in 2017 with early discussions about the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), I want to share the REACH Healthcare Foundation's concerns about any rapid action to repeal the ACA without a well-defined plan for addressing the health coverage needs of Americans.

Your constituents have gained health coverage as a result of the health law. There has been a significant decrease in the uninsured rate across Kansas and in your district. For example, in Johnson County, the rate of uninsurance has dropped from 10% of residents in 2013 to 4% in 2016. Wyandotte County has seen an even greater impact – with the uninsurance rate going from 26% in 2013 to 14% in 2016.

Although Kansas did not expand Medicaid as 31 other states did, thousands of Kansans have taken advantage of the opportunity to purchase health care coverage through the state's federally facilitated health insurance marketplace – and that has helped reduce the heavy cost burden on Kansas workers as well as relieve financial pressure on health providers who provide care to our state's most vulnerable.

Today, only about 61% of Kansans obtain their health coverage through their employer. Many Kansans work in jobs that do not come with health plans, including retail workers, child care providers, farmers, agricultural workers, construction and other fields. Of the approximately 300,000 uninsured Kansans, 59% are between the ages of 19-44 – prime working age.

Therefore, we ask you to encourage House leaders to outline improvements to the health law before taking action to repeal the ACA, and to step back from any strategy of "repeal and delay" that would create instability in the system serving your constituents today.

Furthermore, we ask you to give careful attention to provisions that consumers value, such as protections regarding pre-existing conditions, coverage for young adults up to age 26, and access to basic, preventive care.

The REACH Foundation has invested in quality initiatives and access to care for more than 13 years, working in urban, rural and suburban areas. We have seen first-hand impact that health care has on individual well-being and community health and vitality. I welcome any opportunity to share our experiences with you and to introduce you to health providers who are meeting the health needs of hard-working Kansans every day.

Thank you for representing the concerns of Kansans at this most important time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda R. Sharpe".

Brenda R. Sharpe
President and CEO