

March 22nd, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell,  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan,  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer,  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi,  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi,

The Cities Thrive Coalition is writing to voice our strong opposition to the recently introduced *American Health Care Act (AHCA)*. We are a bi-partisan coalition of 135 of America's mayors advocating on behalf of a stronger and better-funded behavioral health system – one that reaches people where they live, work, worship, and learn.

In January, our Coalition addressed a letter to Senate and House leadership urging both chambers to defend and strengthen the vital reforms passed as part of the *Affordable Care Act (ACA)*. Unfortunately, the AHCA does not achieve those goals. This legislation would take our cities back to the pre-ACA era when securing affordable healthcare coverage was challenging and expensive. Specifically, the AHCA would:

- eliminate health care coverage for 24 million Americans;
- eliminate Medicaid Expansion, which covers 1.2 million Americans with serious mental illness and substance misuse issues;
- eliminate the Essential Health Benefits (EHBs) requirement in Medicaid, which means states could eliminate coverage for mental health and substance misuse treatment;
- cut federal funding to Medicaid through the use of a per capita spending cap, which would severely limit mental health treatment given that 60% of behavioral health spending comes via Medicaid;
- create a 30% surcharge penalty for individuals who have a gap in coverage, which would directly affect those suffering from mental illness and addiction who are at greater risk for prolonged gaps coverage
- eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF).

Put simply, these changes would be devastating. At this moment, one in five Americans is struggling with mental health and substance misuse issues. Depriving them of life-changing – and in many cases, *live-saving* treatment – will send us back to the time when so many people could only find help in our hospitals, shelters and jails.

The Cities Thrive Coalition is united in urging you to oppose this harmful legislation. We ask both Congressional Democrats and Republicans to work together, just as you did on the passage of the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act*, to build upon the life-saving behavioral health reforms we've achieved over the past decade via the *Mental Health Parity Act*, the *Affordable Care Act* and the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act*. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to continue building a behavioral health system that works for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York, NY  
Chirlane McCray, First Lady of New York, NY  
Betsy Hodges, Mayor of Minneapolis, MN  
Pauline Cutter, Mayor of San Leandro, CA  
Gary Herzig, Mayor of Oneonta, NY  
Allison Silberberg, Mayor of Alexandria, VA  
William Bell, Mayor of Birmingham, AL  
Francis Slay, Mayor of St. Louis, MO  
Shawn Hogan, Mayor of Hornell, NY  
Noah Bramson, Mayor of New Rochelle, NY  
Lauren Meister, Mayor of West Hollywood, CA  
Marilyn Strickland, Mayor of Tacoma, WA  
Virgil Bernero, Mayor of Lansing, MI  
Michael Hancock, Mayor of Denver, CO  
Ed Murray, Mayor of Seattle, WA  
Paul Soglin, Mayor of Madison, WI  
Jacob Day, Mayor of Salisbury, MD  
Frank Ortis, Mayor of Pembroke Pines, FL  
James Diosa, Mayor of Central Falls, RI  
Lovely Warren, Mayor of Rochester, NY  
Greg Stanton, Mayor of Phoenix, AZ  
Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor of Gary, IN  
Richard Thomas, Mayor of Mt. Vernon, NY  
Pete Saenz, Mayor of Laredo, TX  
Ted Wheeler, Mayor of Portland, OR  
Steve Fulop, Mayor of Jersey City, NJ  
Luke Bronin, Mayor of Hartford, CT  
Joe Baldacci, Mayor of Bangor, ME  
Alex Morse, Mayor of Holyoke, MA  
John Giles, Mayor of Mesa, AZ  
Adrian Mapp, Mayor of Plainfield, NJ  
William Peduto, Mayor of Pittsburgh, PA  
Jeri Muoio, Mayor of West Palm Beach, FL  
Karen Weaver, Mayor of Flint, MI  
John Engen, Mayor of Missoula, MT  
Buddy Dyer, Mayor of Orlando, FL  
Libby Schaaf, Mayor of Oakland, CA  
Kathy Sheehan, Mayor of Albany, NY  
Curtistene McCowan, Mayor of DeSoto, TX  
George Van Dusen, Mayor of Skokie, IL  
Kirk Caldwell, Mayor of Honolulu, HI  
Jim Donchess, Mayor of Nashua, NH  
Steve Benjamin, Mayor of Columbia, SC  
Stephanie Miner, Mayor of Syracuse, NY  
Jim Kenney, Mayor of Philadelphia, PA  
Ed Lee, Mayor of San Francisco, CA  
Dawn Zimmer, Mayor of Hoboken, NJ  
Jorge Elorza, Mayor of Providence, RI  
Andrew Ginther, Mayor of Columbus, OH  
Laurel Prussing, Mayor of Urbana, IL  
Kim Bracey, Mayor of York, PA  
Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, DC

Joseph Ganim, Mayor of Bridgeport, CT  
Javier Gonzales, Mayor of Santa Fe, NM  
Denise Simmons, Mayor of Cambridge, MA  
Darrell Steinberg, Mayor of Sacramento, CA  
Joseph Petty, Mayor of Worcester, MA  
Helene Schneider, Mayor of Santa Barbara, CA  
Dan Horrigan, Mayor of Akron, OH  
Jonathan Rothschild, Mayor of Tucson, AZ  
Kasim Reed, Mayor of Atlanta, GA  
Andrew Gillum, Mayor of Tallahassee, FL  
John McNally, Mayor of Youngstown, OH  
Liz Lempert, Mayor of Princeton, NJ  
Bobby Hopewell, Mayor of Kalamazoo, MI  
Karen Majewski, Mayor of Hamtramck, MI  
Jackie Biskupski, Mayor of Salt Lake City, UT  
Mark Mitchell, Mayor of Tempe, AZ  
Nan Whaley, Mayor of Dayton, OH  
John Tecklenburg, Mayor of Charleston, SC  
Josh Moenning, Mayor of Norfolk, VA