

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JULY 7TH, 2017

Media contact: Abigail Woodworth

Ph: 212-243-1313 x 136

E: awoodworth@lac.org

**Comprehensive Insurance Coverage is Critical to Stemming Opioid Crisis
*Addiction Experts Oppose BCRA***

Our nation's escalating opioid crisis – with more than 144 people dying every day from overdose – will not abate without access to comprehensive substance use disorder treatment in private insurance and Medicaid. The Senate's version of healthcare repeal would massively undermine national efforts to address this public health epidemic.

No time-limited infusion of federal dollars for addiction treatment can fill the gaping coverage and financing holes, meet the unmet need for substance use treatment, or prevent the significant disruption in health care delivery that will result under the enactment of the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA).

Research has clearly shown that substance use disorders are complex, chronic medical conditions, best treated with comprehensive and integrated care. Until the passage of the Affordable Care Act, substance use disorders were financed and treated separately from the rest of healthcare, largely through government funded block grants. This produced a truly segregated, seriously under-resourced system that contributed to the current addiction epidemic in this country and perpetuated discrimination.

Separate funding to address the opioid crisis will not meet the overarching healthcare needs of patients struggling with addiction, who often have numerous co-occurring health problems that must also be addressed. It will not adequately support prevention for SUDs, nor the long-term recovery management that is indicated for chronic medical illnesses.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that BCRA would cut Medicaid funding by \$772 billion, as the bill would impose caps on federal Medicaid funds and end the Medicaid expansion. These changes would mean that millions of people with substance use disorders would lose coverage for lifesaving treatment. Approximately half of Medicaid enrollees have substance use or mental health disorders, and Medicaid pays for approximately 30% of the cost of medications to treat addiction. Countless people who are currently in treatment and on the road to recovery would lose access to the critical services needed to maintain their health. The rate of opioid fatality would sharply rise.

The BCRA will end significant progress in creating a stable and sustainable financing structure for substance use treatment through Medicaid and private insurance, stripping away addiction coverage from millions of Americans who desperately need it. Further, it would reinstate discriminatory coverage of substance use treatment by allowing states to waive such benefits in Essential Health Benefit-based plans and reinstate underwriting for pre-existing conditions making coverage for addiction treatment unaffordable for many Americans.

The Senate healthcare repeal plan, which would leave 22 million Americans uninsured, is untenable. It will be particularly devastating to millions of Americans who have complex or pre-existing conditions, including substance use disorders. If enacted, the BCRA would undercut our national efforts to stem the opioid crisis, dramatically cutting funding for critical life-saving treatments.

The undersigned individuals and institutions represent leaders in the field of addiction care, research and policy. **We urge Congress to reject this harmful legislation. The devastation caused by the Senate bill will not be ameliorated by a short-term infusion of grant funding to address the opioid epidemic.**

Paul Samuels, JD
President/Director
Legal Action Center

Michael Botticelli
Executive Director, Grayken Center for Addiction Medicine
Boston Medical Center
Former Director, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy

Patty McCarthy Metcalf
Executive Director
Faces & Voices of Recovery

Susan P. Brown
Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer;
Director of Finance and Administration
The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

Chuck Ingoglia
Sr. Vice President, Public Policy and Practice Improvement
National Council for Behavioral Health

Roberta Carlin, M.S., J.D
Executive Director
American Association on Health and Disability

Kelly J. Clark, MD, MBA,
President
American Society of Addiction Medicine

A. Thomas McLellan, PhD
Founder, Treatment Research Institute
Former Deputy Director, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy

Kathryn Cates-Wessel
CEO
American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry

Grant Smith
Deputy Director
National Affairs of the Drug Policy Alliance

Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, NCAC II, CDC III, SAP
Executive Director
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

Jim Hood, Co-Founder and CEO
Greg Williams, Co-Founder and Executive Vice President
Facing Addiction

Emalie Hurliaux, MPH
Director of Federal & State Affairs, Project Inform
Chair, California Hepatitis Alliance

Pamela F. Rodriguez
President & CEO
TASC, Inc. (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities)

Kathleen O'Brien, PhD
President
The Maryland Addictions Directors Council

Hollis Pickett
President
Local Area Support For Hepatitis (LASH)

Tim Clement
Senior Policy Advisor
The Kennedy Forum

Ronald Manderscheid
Executive Director
NACBHDD - National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
NARMH - National Association for Rural Mental Health

Marcia Lee Taylor
Chief Policy Officer
Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

Mark W. Parrino, M.P.A.
President
American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD)

Daniel Raymond
Deputy Director of Planning and Policy,
Harm Reduction Coalition

Alice Dembner
Program Director, Substance Use Disorders and Justice-Involved Populations
Community Catalyst

Gary Mendell
Founder and CEO
Shatterproof

Robert Heimer, PhD
Professor of Epidemiology, Yale School of Public Health
Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS

Alison Oliveto, Ph.D.
Program Director, Clinical Trials Innovation Unit
Translational Research Institute
Professor and Vice Chair for Research
Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Director, Center for Addiction Research
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

David C. Perlman, MD
Professor of Medicine and Chief, Infectious Diseases, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Chief, Infectious Diseases, Mount Sinai Beth Israel

Lois Petty
SEP Site Manager
SLO Bangers Syringe Exchange and Overdose Prevention Program

Richard Hawks, PhD
Deputy Director, Division of Treatment Research and Development, Retired
National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIH

Marguerite Beiser, ANP-BC
Director of HCV Services
Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program

Avik Chatterjee, MD
Physician, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program
Instructor, Harvard Medical School

Jo L. Sotheran, PhD
MARS Project

Scott Burriss
Professor and Director
Center for Public Health Law Research
Temple University Beasley School of Law

Lucy M. Candib, M.D.
Professor
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health

Henry R. Kranzler, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry
Director, Center for Studies of Addiction
University of Pennsylvania
Perelman School of Medicine

Elizabeth Spradley,
Nurse
Johns Hopkins Hospital

Shira Shavit, MD
Executive Director, Transitions Clinic Network
Associate Clinical Professor
University of California, San Francisco

Brendan Saloner, PhD
Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management,
John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Thomas Miller
President
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Sally Bachofer, MD
Associate Professor
Department of Family & Community Medicine
University of New Mexico School of Medicine

Mishka Terplan
Professor Departments Obstetrics and Gynecology and Psychiatry
Virginia Commonwealth University

Diane C. Feirman, CAE
Public Affairs Senior Director
American Group Psychotherapy Association

Aaron Arnold
Executive Director
Prevention Point Pittsburgh

Demetrius Marcoulides, RN MSNc
Founder & Director
Nursing Students for Harm Reduction

Colleen M. Grogan
Professor, School of Social Service Administration
University of Chicago

James K. Rowlett, Ph.D.
Professor
University of Mississippi Medical Center

John Cawley
Professor, Department of Policy Analysis and Management
Professor, Department of Economics
Co-Director, Institute on Health Economics, Health Behaviors and Disparities
Cornell University

Tricia Wright, MD MS FACOG FASAM
Associate Professor Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women's Health
Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry
University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine

Kim Brown RN
President
QC Harm Reduction

Tom Coderre
Senior Advisor
Altarum Institute

Victor Capoccia
Former Team Leader, Addiction Prevention and Treatment
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Howard Josepher
President
Exponents

Wendy Armstrong, MD
Chair of the Board, HIV Medicine Association

Nancy Rosen Cohen
Executive Director, Maryland Chapter
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

Wayne Wirta
President/ CEO
NCADD-NJ

Derek Hodel
Interim Executive Director
Drug Policy Alliance

Jerry Douglas MD
Chief Medical Officer
Hillside Health Center

Hannah Watson MD
Maternal Child and Reproductive Health Fellow
University of New Mexico Hospital

Keith Brown, MPH
Director, Health & Harm Reduction
Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice

Annie Herriott, M.S., MSW
Doctoral Candidate
Boston University School of Social Work

Amanda Latimore, PhD
Director of Social Epidemiology and Evaluation
Behavioral Health System Baltimore

Bruce G. Trigg, MD
Addiction medicine and public health consultant

Paul Pentel
Director, Division of Clinical Pharmacology
Hennepin County Medical Center, Mpls, MN

Matt Slonaker, JD
Executive Director
Utah Health Policy Project

Orlando Chavez
Health Systems Navigator, HIV/HepC Prevention and Harm Reduction Services
GLIDE

Jason Grebely BSc PhD
Associate Professor
Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia
NHMRC Career Development Fellow
President
International Network on Hepatitis in
Substance Users (INHSU)

Cyndee Clay
Executive Director
HIPS

Joseph Rogers
Executive Director
National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse

Andrew N. Pucher
President/CEO
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCAAD)

Arthur C. Evans, PhD
CEO
American Psychological Association

Leo Beletsky, JD, MPH
Associate Professor of Law and Health Sciences
School of Law & Bouvé College of Health Sciences,
Northeastern University
Adjunct Professor Division of Global Public Health
UC San Diego School of Medicine

John Coppola
Executive Director
NY Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers (ASAP)

Andrew Kessler
Principal
Slingshot Solutions