



Wisconsin Medical Society

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Physicians urge changes to BCRA

MADISON— The Wisconsin Medical Society is urging U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson to prioritize patients as they prepare for a Senate vote on the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) of 2017.

“The Society believes it is critical that our citizens have affordable, high quality health care coverage,” said Society President Noel Deep, MD, in a letter to Senators Baldwin and Johnson sent following the Society’s Board of Directors meeting on Saturday. And earlier today, Dr. Deep contacted the Society’s members urging them to contact Sen. Johnson, who is expected to cast one of the deciding votes on BCRA as soon as this week.

In the e-mail to more than 12,500 Society members, Dr. Deep called for coverage of pre-existing conditions, including mental and behavioral health, continued cost-sharing reduction funding to stabilize the insurance market and ensure that low-income citizens who want health insurance can afford it, and adequate funding for Medicaid that does not penalize Wisconsin for its unique approach to expanding health care.

“There has been much made about how Wisconsin did not expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), choosing instead to widen Medicaid eligibility for childless adults up to the poverty line without taking federal dollars available for expansion up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level,” said Dr. Deep. “Any Senate legislation should spend federal funds fairly across the states and not fail to provide critical funding to states that did not utilize the ACA for coverage expansion.”

Earlier this year, the Society developed a set of [health care reform principles](#) as the framework for any health care reform proposal. It urges lawmakers to preserve several patient protections contained in the ACA, including the ban on lifetime caps for coverage and allowing children to remain on their parent’s health care plan until age 26.

“We commend the Senate’s efforts to maintain these vital protections. However, we are concerned that several measures contained within the BCRA will cause some people to either lose their coverage outright, or make coverage unaffordable. Of particular concern are proposed dramatic changes to the Medicaid program, which helps our sickest and poorest citizens,” said Dr. Deep. “We welcome the opportunity to work with all members of Congress to overcome these pressures and improve current law so that fewer citizens are uninsured and safety net programs are adequately funded.”

With over 12,500 members dedicated to the best interests of their patients, the [Wisconsin Medical Society](#) is the largest association of medical doctors in the state and a trusted source for health policy leadership since 1841.

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