



PRESS RELEASE
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ACA increased drug treatment for thousands of Ohioans

President Donald Trump has championed legislation that would especially harm states struggling with the drug epidemic, like Ohio, which ranks third in the nation for drug-related fatalities.

The House Republicans' plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would have stripped 24 million people of insurance by essentially ending Medicaid expansion and making changes to the individual and small group markets. It also proposed eliminating the ACA's essential benefits that guarantee coverage for substance abuse treatment. The plan would have slashed Ohio's Medicaid funding by 10 percent - or \$32 billion - between 2019 and 2028, according to a new report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Nationally, 52,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2015. Ohio had 3,310 drug overdose deaths that year, second only to California. Governor John Kasich's decision to expand Medicaid under the ACA made substance abuse treatment available to people making below 138 percent of the federal poverty line - just over \$16,000 a year for a single person in 2015.

In states that expanded Medicaid, hospitalization rates for uninsured people struggling with mental health or substance use disorders fell from 20 percent in 2013 to 5 percent in mid-2015, according to the report. The Ohio Department of Medicaid found that 75 percent of Medicaid expansion enrollees with opioid use disorders reported better overall access to health care, with 59 percent reporting better access to mental health services.

"The ACA is really helping Ohio, so Congress did the right thing in refusing to repeal it, just as Governor Kasich did the right thing in accepting federal money to expand Medicaid," said Policy Matters Ohio Executive Director Amy Hanauer. "Instead of continuing to try to strike a deal to go backward, President Trump and Congress should build on the ACA's success to respond to the growing drug epidemic."

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a national partner of Policy Matters Ohio.

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Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.

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