



July 27, 2017

Senator Catherine Cortez Masto
204 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

As members of the Board of Health for the Southern Nevada Health District, we write in strong opposition to the Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017 and ask for your commitment to protect the health and access to healthcare for the residents of Clark County and the State. The Senate health care bill would result in 22 million people losing access to affordable health insurance coverage by 2026 and the immediate loss of critical public health and prevention funding.

The Senate health care bill is just as bad for public health as the version that narrowly passed the House of Representatives, and in no way improves upon the Affordable Care Act. The bill would provide smaller premium subsidies for health insurance plans with less generous benefits and would result in higher deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs to many consumers - especially older, low-income Americans. The bill would allow states to opt-out of requiring health plans to cover 10 essential health benefits such as maternity care, mental health and substance abuse disorder services and prescription drug coverage. The bill would also allow insurers to charge older adults premiums five times higher than younger enrollees. The bill would phase out the ACA's Medicaid expansion, cut the Medicaid program by \$772 billion over a decade and convert the program to a per capita amount or block grant and lead to even deeper cuts in Medicaid funding starting in 2025 compared to the House-passed bill. Additionally, the bill would eliminate Medicaid reimbursements to Planned Parenthood for one year resulting in about 15 percent of its patients losing care, more unintended births and increased spending for the Medicaid program.

Starting next year, the bill would eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund, critical mandatory funding that now totals 12 percent of the budget at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This cut would be devastating to the Southern Nevada Health District and University Medical Center. Eliminating this funding would cripple our programs that fight obesity, curb tobacco use, provide immunizations and respond to public health threats and outbreaks like the Zika and Ebola viruses.

We urge you to continue to oppose any legislative efforts that result in harm to the health and healthcare access of Clark County and State residents. We hope you will have an opportunity to work collaboratively with your colleagues in the Senate through a process open to the best ideas on how to tackle the difficult issues surrounding healthcare in our nation; one which leads to

solutions that build upon and enhances the gains achieved through the Affordable Care Act and provides better opportunities for our citizens to lead healthy and productive lives.

Sincerely,

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT BOARD OF HEALTH

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