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# WEST PLAINS OCCUPATIONAL & INSURANCE PHYSICALS PC

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## Healthcare system impact

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Posted: Friday, February 24, 2017 4:59 pm

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To the editor,

Whatever your politics, restructuring our healthcare system will affect all lives; for many it will be life-changing, for some it will be life-threatening. Revamping the healthcare system warrants a town hall meeting with Representative Jason Smith. He has a responsibility to know the concerns of his constituents, and we have a right to hear from him what Congress intends.

▶ Only 16 percent of Americans favor repeal of the Affirmative Care Act (ACA). Eighty-three percent oppose repeal until there is a replacement (Quinnipiac University poll, 2/10/17). Many Missourians are not aware of the full range of benefits the ACA provides.

You may know about the most popular features, for example prohibiting denial of coverage owing to pre-existing conditions. There are other provisions that most people would want if they were aware of them. Here are some. These are actions that insurance companies cannot take because of the ACA: cancel your policy, cap your annual or lifetime benefits, charge females more than males for the same medical procedure, exceed the cap authorized by the ACA on non-medical and administrative procedures.

There are other less well known but helpful provisions of the ACA. It covers preventive services, guarantees access to an appeals process, saved Medicare beneficiaries \$20.8 billion on prescription drugs in the last five years, and makes available comparisons of various insurance plans on the market. No one is satisfied with the ACA, but let's keep the baby and throw out only the bath water.

Few people know that "a full repeal of the ACA would eliminate Medicare benefits created by the law." Fifty-seven million Americans depend on Medicare to help them pay for medical expenses. Seventy-seven percent of respondents to a Kaiser Foundation poll regard Medicare to be very important (AARP Bulletin, January/February 2017). Don't let Congress substitute a voucher or health savings account in place of Medicare.

Jason Smith is not going to come unless he hears from us-- large numbers of us. Call his office and urge him to hold a public meeting here. That's what we hired him to do; it's not too much to ask. (His Rolla office: 573 751-1882; his Washington office: 202 225-4404)

The information above was provided by Dr. John Mihalevich, Springfield, member of the board of Missouri Healthcare for All. He based the information on America's Bitter Pill, by Steven Brill.

Dan Leary



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