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# Rally draws opponents to healthcare act changes

By: Jim Erickson

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The intersection of Manchester and Weidman Roads is a busy place at 8 a.m. weekdays with rush-hour traffic volume still heavy. But it was even more active March 20 when dozens of people rallied there to oppose the American Health Care Act (AHCA).

The GOP-backed legislation, likely to be voted on soon in the U.S. House, would repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly known as Obamacare.

Carrying printed and hand-lettered signs, group members scattered to all four corners of the intersection, often cheering as many passing drivers tooted their horns in response to placards urging "Honk for healthcare."

Making it clear which "healthcare" was being referred to were other signs declaring "AHCA raises costs for the elderly and the poor" and some critical of Republican Congresswoman Ann Wagner of Ballwin, whose Second Congressional District includes the West County area. "Ann Wagner puts politics ahead of people," a hand-lettered sign said.

The rally originally was scheduled at Wagner's local headquarters, located in an office building complex on Sovereign Court east of Weidman Road and north of Manchester Road just east of Manchester's city limits. However, leaders from the sponsoring Missouri Health Care for All organization moved the gathering site to the parking lot of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 655, a short walk to the Weidman-Manchester intersection where visibility of the rally to passersby was greater.

Karen Cloyd, of Wildwood, was one of the rally participants. "Obamacare isn't perfect, but why couldn't we have spent the past seven or more years working to improve it?" she asked. "Instead, all we heard was 'repeal, repeal, repeal.'

"My physician has told me she knows of people who have died because Medicaid hasn't been expanded in Missouri."

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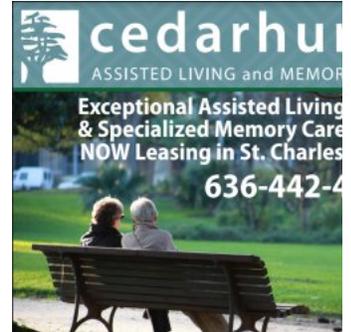
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Kathleen Quain, of Manchester, readily conceded her more liberal background, noting her grandmother was an ardent supporter of President Franklin Roosevelt.

"Government doesn't have to be a bad thing," she said while walking to the intersection with a placard criticizing Wagner. "Its role is to help people with things they can't do on their own. Ours is one of the few Western countries that doesn't have some type of universal health care program.

"I think it's smart to have a policy that keeps hospitals open and available to people because it's an investment in our country's future."

David and Rhonda Banford, of Chesterfield, have personal experience with the ACA. "We signed up for coverage at healthcare.gov," David recalled. "I'm retired and I think it's fair to say we would be bankrupt now without it."

Rhonda Banford was diagnosed with breast cancer and injections after her expensive treatments cost \$18,000 each, he explained.

"The point is that the injections also were covered due to the minimum standards our policy had to meet," he said. "Those minimum standards are really important because when people like us sign up they never know what they might have to deal with later on."

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