LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

http://www.stltoday.com/opinion/mailbag/repeal-of-affordable-care-act-would-devastate-job-market/article_382a8fb4-3dde-510d-a882-60f764057c0d.html

Repeal of Affordable Care Act would devastate job market

Aug 31, 2017

Arlene Zaremba (left) holds up a sign during a protest outside Sen. Roy Blunt's Clayton office over Blunt's support of the repeal of the Affordable Care Act on Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2017. The protest, organized by Missouri Healthcare for All, took place in seven different cities around Missouri. In addition Clayton protests were also held in Dexter, Springfield, Joplin, Arnold, West Plains, and St. Louis. About 40 people took part in the protest. Photo by David Carson, dcarson@post-dispatch.com

David Carson

Despite the failure to repeal the Affordable Care Act in the Senate, it is likely the issue will be revisited in congressional sessions under the current administration. Over the course of the heated political debate, numerous articles and studies arose relaying the devastating insurance losses by millions if "repeal-without-replacement" had succeeded.

However, as a nurse employed in St. Louis, I am also deeply troubled by the devastating ramifications on the career market in the St. Louis metro area if attempts to repeal the ACA without replacement are made.

In July, the American Nurses Association published "The High Stakes of ACA Repeal and the 2017 Senate Health Care Plan," revealing that repealing the ACA would cause an estimated nationwide loss of 1 million jobs, particularly nursing careers.

St. Louis would be greatly affected by such losses. The health care industry employs more than 166,000 people in the metro area, totaling 12 percent of local employment, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It isn't surprising when considering the presence of Mercy, SSM and BJC health networks, Express Scripts, Centene, etc.

I urge my fellow nurses, patient care technicians and especially congressional leaders to stand up and speak out against attempts to abandon the ACA in its entirety.

Although far from ideal, the ACA has improved many aspects of health care. We must focus efforts toward a bipartisan solution amending the deficiencies of this wide-sweeping legislation, because the ramifications of repeal-without-replacement are too great to suffer in our own neighborhoods.

Cory Austin • St. Louis

From the mailbag: Danforth talks, but was Blunt listening?