

St. Louisans protest repeal of the Affordable Care Act

Kiya Edwards, KSDK 5:15 PM. CST January 17, 2017



CLAYTON, Mo. (KSDK) - Dozens of people took to the streets Tuesday to voice their concerns about the future of the Affordable Care Act. Missouri Healthcare for All hosted protests throughout the state, including outside the offices of Sen. Claire McCaskill (D) in St. Louis and Sen. Roy Blunt (R) in Clayton.

In Clayton, protester Rhonda Banford said she participated because the Affordable Care Act is suitable for her healthcare needs.

"I was diagnosed with cancer at the end of 2014 and I'm self-employed," Banford said. "If I had not had the Affordable Care Act to rely on, I would have had a pre-existing condition. I would not been able to have healthcare for my cancer treatment."

However, both the Senate and the House recently voted to advance the process to repeal it. Jen Bersdale, executive director of Missouri Healthcare for All, says, with no specific replacement plan approved, Affordable Care Act supporters are concerned about the future of their healthcare.

"It's like tearing down your house without having a replacement place to live," Bersdale said. "So that's what we're out here to say is don't take people's health insurance and healthcare away without telling them what they're going to have and without guaranteeing that it will be in place in time."

Protester Anne Taussig says her daughter has had an Affordable Car Act plan for three years now.

"It's critical for us to have healthcare in this country," Taussig said.

Meanwhile, Jenn Lehouiller, who was in the area near the protest site Tuesday, says the current plan doesn't work for all citizens.

"I don't believe it's the perfect plan," Lehouiller said. "My insurance premiums went up from \$13 per paycheck before the Affordable Care Act to over \$60 and now, with a family, it's \$140. So I believe everybody has the right to healthcare, affordable healthcare, however, we do have to come to some middle ground that helps everyone."

Sen. Blunt released a statement Tuesday in response to the protests.

“ I've heard from many Missourians who are struggling under the president's health care law, which has left them with higher costs and fewer options than they had even a year ago," Blunt said. "This year, 97 Missouri counties will have only one insurer participating in the Obamacare exchanges. Last year, every Missouri county had at least two insurance options. In addition, most Missourians will see an increase in their premiums, with some facing an increase upward of 40 percent. Those who can't afford the few options available to them will face a penalty of more than \$2,000. Missouri families shouldn't be punished for a law that just isn't working, and isn't living up to the president's promises. That's why the Senate has taken the first step toward repealing the law, and paving the way for real solutions that will expand access to quality, affordable health care for all Missourians.

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