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Community Health Advocates Celebrate the 7th Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act While Congress Tries to Repeal it

Community Health Partnership, Asian Americans for Community Involvement, Santa Clara County Supervisors Ken Yeager and Cindy Chavez, and health care advocates stand in defense of the Affordable Care Act

San Jose, CA - Today on the 7th Anniversary of President Barak Obama’s signing of the landmark Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), a broad coalition of elected officials, community health organizations, immigrant rights groups, clinic workers, patients, and allies voiced their opposition to the dismantling of the ACA.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, millions more Californians have health coverage. Since the ACA’s adoption in 2010 and its full implementation three years later, the uninsured rate in California dropped from 17.2 percent in 2013 to a historic low of 7.4% in 2016. For community clinics, the uninsured rate fell from 35% to 24% in just three years.

Santa Clara County Supervisor Ken Yeager, Chair of the Board’s Health and Hospital Committee lauded the success of the ACA saying, “The ACA has had a tremendously positive impact on Santa Clara County. More than 180,000 County residents have gained coverage, the number of uninsured patients at VMC has dropped 91%, patients are obtaining more preventive care earlier, and VMC’s finances have stabilized. The American Health Care Act puts all of those gains and more at risk. It’s a disaster for our community.”

If the affordable care act is repealed, millions of Californians and hundreds of thousands of Santa Clara County residents who get health coverage through Covered California or Medicaid Expansion’s federal subsidies could lose health coverage. “It’s beyond a bittersweet anniversary for the Affordable Care Act. For seven years it’s taken the daunting risks of being uninsured off the minds of thousands of men, women and children in Santa Clara County,” said Supervisor Cindy Chavez. “Today many Republicans want to dismantle it and cut the safety net loose. I’m doing everything possible to make sure this county is prepared to rebuild. It’s a race against the clock.”
“The repeal of the ACA is an attack on immigrants who under Medicaid Expansion are eligible for health coverage,” said Sarita Kohli, CEO for Asian Americans for Community Involvement, the largest community-based organization in Santa Clara County serving the Asian community. “The replacement to the ACA completely eliminates all that funding which leaves tens of thousands of immigrant families without coverage.”

“The future of the nation’s community health centers is uncertain,” stated Reymundo Espinoza, CEO of Gardner Family Health Network, whose clinics serve 50,000 low and moderate-income Santa Clara County residents. “Clinics across the country are poised to lose as much as 70% of federal Medicaid Expansion funding and per patient reimbursements will be replaced with block grants that do not consider patient volume, demographics, and medical needs. Without preventative health care, clinics like Gardner and the County hospital will see many more, much sicker patients in our waiting rooms and have less resources to provide treatment.”

Dolores Alvarado, CEO for Community Health Partnership, an association of community health centers in Santa Clara and San Mateo County summed it up. “The repeal of the Affordable Care Act is attempts to balance the federal budget on the backs of women, children, seniors, the disabled, immigrants and the poor. What health coverage that will remain, under the new proposal, will be too expensive or not comprehensive enough to give people the basic care they need.” Added Ms. Alvarado, “Slashing funding for health care will pit the needs of one vulnerable group against another to the point that everyone is fighting for crumbs.”

Community Health Partnership is a non-profit association of community health centers and clinics in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. The mission of Community Health Partnership is to advocate for affordable and accessible health services for a diverse and multicultural communities regardless of socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, or cultural background, and to support its member organizations in achieving these goals. For more information about Community Health Partnership, visit www.chpssc.org.

Asian Americans for Community Involvement is Santa Clara County’s largest community-based organization focused on the Asian community. Its mission is to improve the health, mental health, and well-being of individuals, families and the Asian community by providing an array of high quality health and human services and providing leadership and advocacy on health policy. For more information about AACI, visit www.aaci.org.

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