



November 21, 2017

Via Email

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Opposition to Repealing the Individual Mandate

Dear Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

I am writing on behalf of the Emergency Department Practice Management Association (EDPMA) to urge you not to repeal the individual mandate to purchase health insurance. EDPMA is one of the nation's largest professional physician trade associations focused on the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective care in the emergency department. EDPMA's members include emergency physician groups and billing, coding, and other professional support organizations that assist healthcare providers in our nation's emergency departments. **Together, EDPMA's members deliver (or directly support) health care for about half of the 141 million patients that visit U.S. emergency departments each year.** We work collectively and collaboratively to deliver essential healthcare services, often unmet elsewhere, to an underserved patient population who often has nowhere else to turn.

The proposal to repeal the individual mandate as part of the tax package (or any piece of legislation) would significantly destabilize the health insurance markets and lead to higher premiums. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 13 million fewer Americans would have health coverage if the mandate is repealed.

Emergency departments are the nation's health safety net. Federal law – through the Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act (EMTALA) - requires hospitals and physicians to evaluate and stabilize everyone visiting the emergency department, no matter the ability to pay. So, even though emergency physicians are only 4% of physicians, *they provide 50% of all care given to Medicaid and CHIP patients and 67% of all care to uninsured patients.* Many argue that the 13 million individuals who would no longer have health coverage could still receive EMTALA-mandated care in the emergency department, but would have no health insurance for that care. With deep cuts to insurance coverage, the demand for care in the nation's emergency departments would skyrocket while the resources for that care would simultaneously plummet. In addition, significantly fewer physicians would be attracted to a specialty that has excessive demand, but is not fairly compensated. This would likely lead to longer wait times for everyone visiting the emergency department, and some emergency departments, especially those in rural areas, would be in jeopardy of closing permanently. This would significantly threaten access to care for patients.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A Brault".

Andrea Brault, MD, FACEP, MMM, Chair of the Board
Emergency Department Practice Management Association (EDPMA)

cc Members of the Senate