

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2017

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

RE: Don't Raise Floridians' Health Care Costs – Commit to Cost-Sharing Reductions

Dear Mr. President:

Families across America are anxiously awaiting the determination by your Administration on the future of their affordable health care. We urge you to commit now to maintaining cost-sharing reduction (CSR) payments as the law requires. These payments are a critical component of providing affordable quality health coverage to American families, particularly Floridians. Otherwise, Republicans will be responsible for significant cost increases in health insurance for millions of Americans.

About seven million Americans were enrolled in a plan with reduced cost-sharing in 2017. In Florida, 71 percent of marketplace enrollees – 1.24 million Floridians – benefited from CSRs in 2016 according to a March 2017 report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). On average, Florida enrollees receive over \$1,200 in assistance through CSRs. Floridians are watching very closely to see if you intend to abandon them and stick them with much higher health insurance bills.

In fact, it is likely that our neighbors with private health insurance also would be hit with higher bills if the sabotage of the ACA continues. People likely would lose affordable health coverage and the costs of their care would be shifted to people with insurance. The CSRs are vital to keeping the marketplace working and keeping others, especially those with health insurance through their job, from paying more. Many knowledgeable insurance experts have advised us how consumer choices will be limited and premiums will likely increase if you do not commit to fund CSR payments. We have heard you and our Republican colleagues talk a great deal about freedom of choice and lower premiums for consumers; however, leaving insurers and consumers with no commitment on CSRs will throw the marketplace into disarray – putting our neighbors at risk of losing affordable quality health coverage. A recent report from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that without cost-sharing reduction payments, premiums will likely be higher in states that have not expanded Medicaid – like Florida – due to the large number of marketplace consumers who have incomes between 100-138 percent of poverty who qualify for the largest cost-sharing reductions. Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that silver plan premiums would have to increase by 19 percent to compensate for the loss of CSRs. With an increase in premiums, the federal government will have to spend more on premium tax credits, which Kaiser Family Foundation believes will be 23 percent more than the savings from eliminating CSRs – about a \$2.3 billion net increase in federal costs in Fiscal Year 2018 and \$31 billion more over the 10-year budget window.

One popular Republican talking point is the so-called “implosion” of the HealthCare.gov marketplace. With over 1.7 million Floridians in the HealthCare.gov marketplace, it is clear that the marketplace is not “imploding”, but could be crushed from the outside if you continue the assault on the ACA and pull the rug out from under our neighbors. In fact, in March the top insurer in the Florida HealthCare.gov marketplace and Standard and Poors’s debunked any “death spiral” talk by releasing numbers that demonstrate profitability and stability.

The national uninsured rate is now at a historic low. Florida’s rate of uninsured adults fell nine points from 2013 to 2015 because many of our neighbors took personal responsibility to get covered and the ACA provided affordable options. When more of our neighbors are covered, it helps contain costs for everyone. Insurers are making decisions for the 2018 plan year right now and if there is no CSR funding by your Administration as obligated by law, you will be responsible for higher costs for our neighbors, the destabilization of the marketplace and the deliberate sabotage of our neighbors’ health and financial wellbeing. We urge you to make these cost-sharing payments and commit to making them permanent and work to improve the ACA rather than destroy it.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
United States Representative



Ted Deutch
United States Representative



Alcee L. Hastings
United States Representative



Val Butler Demings
United States Representative



Charlie Crist
United States Representative



Al Lawson
United States Representative



Frederica S. Wilson
United States Representative



Lois Frankel
United States Representative



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
United States Representative



Darren Soto
United States Representative



Stephanie Murphy
United States Representative