April 10, 2017

Member Organizations
National Bar Association
Association of Black Psychologists
National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc.
Howard University School of Law
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc.
National Dental Association
National Black Caucus of State Legislators
Association of Black Sociologists
National Black Nurses Association, Inc.
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice
National Black Alcoholism & Addictions Council, Inc.
Association of Black Health System Pharmacists
National Medical Association
National Black Police Association
National Alliance of Black School Educators
National Conference of Black Political Scientists
Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc.
National Black Prosecutors Association
National Organization of African Americans in Housing
Trumphood Marshall Action Coalition
National Historically Black Colleges & Universities Substance Abuse Consortium, Inc.
National Association of Health Services Executives
Human Resources Development Institute, Inc. (HRDI)
"Concerned Black Men National"
163 Black Men of America, Inc.

Honorable Mitchell McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell  

Dear Mr. Speaker Ryan

The National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc. principal mission is to advocate, educate and to promote position changes in our healthcare system to eliminate disparate access and treatment and unlawful discrimination to persons afflicted with drug dependency and addiction and related mental health issues. Our objective is to bring about reforms in the juvenile and criminal justice systems which result from the usage and trafficking in illegal drugs and abuse of prescription drugs and related crime and violence involved in this Nation as a result.

From the very beginning of our existence we have strongly advocated for a medical and public health approach to these problems rather than reliance on the juvenile delinquency and criminal justice approach in resolving these problems for the Nation resulting in the economic costs of Mass Incarceration in the law enforcement, judicial involvement, and the penal correction approaches with the heavy costs involved to the States and the Federal governments. Thus, in making changes to the present healthcare system we urge you and all the Members of Congress to consider the increased costs to law enforcement, the legal and judicial systems, and the cost of incarceration.

Specifically, we are strongly concerned with the Congressional Budget Office’s projection that some 24 Million people will be denied health insurance coverage under the proposed changes to the Affordable Care Act over the next 10 years. We view this Office as a neutral non-political entity. To us, this would greatly increase the number of individuals in this country living under poverty standards rather than bringing persons out of poverty in this Nation and increasing the quality of life for everyone. We are concerned greatly about the increased costs to hospitals and the emergency medical care they will be called upon to give without compensation and the greatly increased to Emergency Rooms to be absorbed by the medical system in the United States of America.
We are also concerned about increased crime and violence that can be reasonably anticipated by persons in bad health who will rob and steal and become involved in illegal drugs because of their medical conditions, or committing suicide, or dying younger and the lost of more productive years they could have had but for an inadequate healthcare system. Many of these people could remain in the workforce and pay taxes if they had access to adequate healthcare, who well might turn to selling and using illegal drugs or other underground employment activities which would be crimes just to survive. In our view, Congress should weight these consideration rather than just look at our healthcare system in isolation in view of these strong considerations. If people remain healthy longer, work and add to our economic wellbeing, and pay taxes, the healthcare system which is adequate to meet their needs, this approach may greatly add to the quality of life in this Nation and its economic growth, quality of our workforce, and our very national security.

Congress must weigh the consequences and cost impact being proposed in our healthcare system as to how they will impact our other governmental costs and obligations such as dealing with the homeless, with all persons who may sink deeper into poverty, with inadequate medical care of our veterans, the strong potential for greater alcoholism and the use of illegal drugs to make their lives tolerable and the strong potential for increased crime and violence, and costs of increased arrests, court cases, and incarceration.

Finally, we want to emphasize that quality healthcare for our children must continue to be protected, and even enhanced, for they are our future both as to their quality of life over a lifetime, their productivity impacting the economic condition of this Nation in the future. Where from childhood their health issues are resolved, they can better educate themselves and they will be able to function in the workforce world in which they will live as adults, many more of them can become outstanding scientists and professionals and technologists and other experts in the fields our economic will demand if we are to remain competitive with the other Nations of the World. With excellent healthcare these children could be most productive individuals throughout their lives to greatly reducing crime and violence and solve the problems facing our Government today of 25 percent or more of our people living below the poverty line and becoming a more divided Nation than we are today.

In conclusion, the quality of healthcare we provide in this Nation is of the utmost importance as it lies at the very core of the abilities of our people to be outstanding in all of the other sectors of our Government. It is vital to all the other services with which we deal – family formation and support, education, a quality workforce, economic improvement for far more people and thus the reduction of poverty in this Nation, significant decrease in crime and violence and increase in public safety, and indeed our very national security.
Letter to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, U.S. Senate and Speaker of the House
Paul Ryan, U.S. House of Representatives, Dated April 10, 2017,
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While we deeply appreciate that a vote on the Affordable Care Act did not occur
at the end of March 2017, we strongly urge that whatever Amendments and Reforms
Congress may consider making to the Affordable Care Act in the future will contribute to
the quality of healthcare provided to all persons residing within the United States of
America from their birth and throughout their lives. This letter is submitted with the
explicit strong approval of the Officers and Board of Directors of the National African
American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.

Respectfully Submitted

Arthur L. Burnett, Jr.
Retired Judge
Vice President of Administration