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Citizen Action of Wisconsin: Research shows massive increase in health premiums in Wisconsin cities under House GOP replacement bill

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Statewide: On a media call this morning Citizen Action released a research brief showing dramatic increases ranging from 313% to 910% in health insurance premiums for older moderate income Wisconsinites under the House GOP replacement for the Affordable Care Act. Listen to the media call here.

The research brief, The Impact of House ACA Replacement Plan on Older Low Income Wisconsinites, analyzed the health insurance premiums that will be paid by consumers in 15 Wisconsin metro areas, and found huge increases of between $5,900 and $12,900 per year for low income seniors too young to qualify for Medicare. Charts showing the premium increases in each Wisconsin metro area are available here.

The research brief found that the House GOP plan's combination of allowing health insurance companies to charge senior 5 times more for coverage than young people, and tax credits that do not adjust for income or the actual cost of health insurance will have a devastating impact on the affordability of health insurance for older and moderate income Wisconsinites who buy insurance on the individual market. The impact is tremendous in every Wisconsin city, but is even worse in

areas where health insurance is more expensive.

“It is clear from the shocking numbers in this report that this is a bait-and-switch and that the authors of the House Republican replacement plan have no intention of offering affordable health coverage to older adults who need it most,” said Robert Kraig, Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin. “Asking low income older adults to pay over $10,000 more each year for health coverage is a prescription for disaster which will leave people across Wisconsin with no choice but to go without insurance. ”

“This replacement plan is outrageous,” said Dr. Cynthia Haq, Professor of Family Medicine and Population Health Sciences, UW School of Medicine and Public Health. “Its effects will be devastating to the people of Wisconsin. As a family doctor who has worked in Wisconsin for more than 30 years, both in rural Belleville and now in urban Milwaukee, I can see the results of this plan will absolutely result in people suffering and dying prematurely. People will have to forgo health insurance coverage. They will not seek care. They will not get preventive services. They will not be able to manage their chronic diseases. As result, they’ll show up in the emergency departments of hospitals in extreme crisis with strokes, heart attacks and so forth which will be much more expensive to treat and which will drive up health care costs for everyone,” said Dr. Haq. “This replacement plan is bad for Wisconsin, for people, for families, communities, for businesses. And health professionals will not be able to address this problem, this is a policy issue.”

“It’s undoubtable that this bill will hurt the seniors I see everyday,” said Tracey Schwerdtfeger, member of Wisconsin Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals who works at St. Francis Hospital in Milwaukee.

“Under the Republican plan insurance companies can charge older adults 5 times more than young people,” stated Jane Benson a small business owner from Green Bay who with her husband buys insurance through the Affordable Care Act marketplace. “The Republican healthcare plan is poised to price us out of even having catastrophic health insurance.”

Web version of news release http://www.citizenactionwi.org/massive_increase_in_-health_premiums