

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Releases statement on passage of the American Health Care Act

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Washington, D.C. - Today Rep. Mike Gallagher released the following statement after the House passed the *American Health Care Act*:

“As the current healthcare system in America continues to break down, it’s become increasingly clear that the federal government does not know best when it comes to providing healthcare for the 323 million people in the United States. Millions of families have lost access to their preferred doctor, have had their health plan discontinued, or have had their premiums and deductibles rise so high that they’re effectively still uninsured. And while our national healthcare system was certainly broken prior to the ACA, Obamacare only exacerbated its problems. The federal government’s one-size fits all approach is failing and I believe the future of healthcare’s best path forward is through state innovation.

Lost in the national debate on the future of healthcare is the history of Wisconsin’s healthcare system. For years prior to Obamacare, Wisconsin and other states were developing their own solutions to ensure that those who needed care could receive it, took care of families with preexisting conditions and unique needs, and had their own insurance commissioners and regulators for generations. The fact that this bill allows Wisconsin the freedom to determine its own path forward is a promising first step.

During the years before Obamacare, Wisconsin was a model for how to provide

health care for its citizens in an innovative way through its successful high-risk pool program. It was a state-sponsored partnership between doctors, private insurance, and patients who were unable to receive individual insurance on the private market. In speaking with Wisconsin's Insurance Commissioner recently, he pointed out that before Obamacare ended Wisconsin's program, it was functioning in an entirely stable, affordable and self-sufficient market without any state government supplemental funds— this is an example of what we should expect from our system today.

It's also important to note that because Wisconsin developed its own way of expanding Medicaid coverage without using Obamacare funds, under this bill Wisconsin will have even more flexibility to cover its most vulnerable populations.

This bill gives states the ability to stabilize insurance markets by providing \$130 billion to protect the most vulnerable in the individual insurance market. Additionally, the bill provides \$15 billion to help states get back to a model like Wisconsin had where they can mitigate costs through high risk pools. Another \$8 billion is designated in the bill for the specific purpose of helping those with pre-existing conditions find the affordable coverage they need. Additionally, I strongly believe that Washington must abide by the laws that it passes for the rest of America which is why I was an original cosponsor and supporter legislation that forces Members of Congress and their staff to abide by the provisions contained in the AHCA.

This legislation is far from perfect and I look forward to continuing the process of improving the bill as it makes its way through the U.S. Senate. Senate leaders have already assured me that the credits for low income families will be increased in the coming weeks.

This is an emotionally charged issue for many families in Northeast Wisconsin concerned about the future of their healthcare. I understand and share these concerns and believe it's vitally important that we put healthcare on a sustainable path for the future, which must ultimately include broader reforms like driving down drug prices, increasing transparency and changing the incentive structure for doctors. I remain firm in my commitment to protecting our seniors, protecting those with preexisting conditions, and assisting those with lower incomes in Northeast Wisconsin to ensure that they have the quality care they need and deserve.”