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Protect Our Care: Attorney General Josh Kaul and community health care providers highlight what is at stake for Wisconsinites in lawsuit challenging critical ACA protections

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MADISON, WI — Today, Wisconsin Attorney General Josh, Vivent Health Interim President & CEO Brandon Hill, and Planned Parenthood's Mona Williams joined Protect Our Care Wisconsin to discuss U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor's devastating decision to strike down a major provision of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that requires free coverage of lifesaving preventive health care services. Judge O'Connor's decision in *Braidwood Management v. Becerra* would end the ACA's guaranteed free access to essential preventive services including lifesaving cancer screenings, and more. In 2020 alone, more than 150 million Americans benefited from these preventive services.

On June 13, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals granted a partial stay pending appeal in the case, protecting free preventive care for 150 million Americans as the case moves through the courts. The court order, approving an agreement reached by the parties, means that, while the ruling stands for the plaintiffs, it will not go into immediate effect nationwide as Judge O'Connor previously ruled. While millions of people can breathe a sigh of relief knowing that they can continue to access free preventive care, these services remain at risk.

Last month, more than 300 experts, including leading patient and provider groups, legal and public health experts, organized labor, and more signed onto briefs calling for the Fifth Circuit to protect the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) no-cost preventive

care provision that more 150 million Americans currently rely on. Protect Our Care joined a brief with 16 other advocacy groups warning that if Judge Reed O'Connor's ruling stands, the consequences for patients would be devastating.

Recently, **Attorney General Kaul** joined a separate amicus curiae arguing in favor of preserving access to preventative health care services. "The Braidwood case is yet another attack on the ACA and access to affordable health care," said Kaul.

Brandon Hill, interim President & CEO of Vivent Health, a provider that serves more than half of HIV+ Wisconsinites statewide, warned about the disparate impact the Braidwood case could have on the LGBTQ+ community, saying "These attacks force our friends, our neighbors, our community, further and further away from health care."

Planned Parenthood's Mona Williams spoke passionately about how Braidwood could impact sexual and reproductive health care. "Restrictions on access to preventative sexual and reproductive health care disproportionately harms Black, Latino, and Indigenous communities who already face barriers to health care," said Williams. "All of our health, rights, and freedoms are at risk."

You can watch the event here and learn more about what is at stake in *Braidwood Management v. Becerra* here.