

For Immediate Release

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AUCD Acts to Protect the Health Care Reform Law

SILVER SPRING, MD (January 14, 2011) — House Republican leaders recently introduced legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148) in its entirety. The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) is acting to protect this vital law that is helping millions of Americans, including those with disabilities, access affordable quality health care.

“Repealing this landmark legislation will not only add to our nation’s deficit (recent CBO analyses estimate it could add as much as \$230 billion), but will strip away numerous provisions that finally provide access to health care to people with disabilities,” says George Jesien, PhD, Executive Director of AUCD, a national network of interdisciplinary centers advancing policy and practice for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities. “AUCD will work with partner disability and health organizations to educate new and returning congressional members on the gains made through health care reform for those living with a disability. Now is not the time to take away what has taken so long to win for those who have struggled to fully participate in our nation’s health system,” Jesien added.

The law’s improvements include:

- Important insurance market reforms that prohibit insurers from denying coverage to children with disabilities such as asthma, cerebral palsy or epilepsy;
- An emphasis on prevention and wellness to help support a healthy workforce, a necessity in recovering from the recession and competing in our global marketplace;
- Preventing families from having to turn down jobs, move to higher paying jobs or impoverish themselves to qualify for Medicaid;

- Freeing families from the worry that they'll lose their benefits when insurers unfairly cancel or cap their coverage if they or their children get sick;
- New long-term services and supports options to provide flexibility to States to provide services and supports to seniors and people with disabilities of all ages in the community, rather than using more expensive out-of-home services;
- Provisions that reward prevention and quality in the health care system over quantity; and
- Requirements for health care providers to have accessible medical and diagnostic equipment so that people with disabilities can get through doors, use examination tables and weight scales, and receive preventive services like mammograms, often for the first time ever.

“People with disabilities already face significant disparities in accessing quality, affordable health care. The long-overdue reforms contained in the Affordable Care Act will ensure that this population receives the same opportunity to access care and treatments as every other American,” says Jesien.

The membership of AUCD includes a national network of 67 University Centers for Excellence (UCEDD); 39 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) programs; and 15 Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRC). Together, these programs provide a direct national impact through direct services, the development of new, well trained professionals, and the use of new knowledge generated from research.

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