



COMMITTEE ON  
**ENERGY & COMMERCE**  
DEMOCRATS  
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Pallone Stresses Importance of Medicaid at Health Hearing**

*“To tear down Medicaid, which is supported by CHIP and community health centers, is misguided and hypocritical.”*

**Washington, D.C.** – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks at a Health Subcommittee hearing titled, “Examining the Extension of Safety Net Programs:”*

A little over a month ago, House Republicans voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act and gut the Medicaid program in order to give tax cuts to the rich and privileged few. The result – 23 million people could lose health insurance – 3 million of them children. And then yesterday, Senate Republicans finally made public their bill where they proposed even steeper cuts to Medicaid.

And now, today, Republicans will talk about the importance of our safety net programs – the Children’s Health Insurance Program – CHIP – and the Community Health Center Fund. I agree wholeheartedly about the importance of extending these programs. But what our Republican colleagues seem to ignore is that our safety net is interconnected. To tear down Medicaid, which is supported by CHIP and community health centers, is misguided and hypocritical.

Mr. Chairman, I believe you should judge a nation by how it treats its children. CHIP covers 8.9 million kids. It stands on the shoulders of a strong Medicaid program that covers 37.1 million more children. Every single one of these kids deserves access to a doctor, access to good health care, and we should be able to meet this very basic need for them. Yet every Republican on this Committee voted for a bill in Committee that capped health coverage for kids in every one of our communities. As a result of that vote, three million children would lose their health insurance. That is simply not right.

Today we will also have a conversation about Community Health Centers -- the providers that serve so many of our most vulnerable children.

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The Community Health Center Fund provides 70 percent of the funding for the Health Center Program, which accounts for 20 percent of revenue for community health centers. According to estimates, failure to reauthorize this funding would result in the closure of approximately 2,800 health center locations, 50,000 current clinicians and other staff losing their jobs, and most importantly 9 million patients losing access to care.

I strongly believe a swift reauthorization of this funding is important. At the same time, I'd like to remind my Republican colleagues that Medicaid is the largest single funding source for community health centers – providing more than 40 percent of their revenue during fiscal year 2016. We cannot ignore the devastating consequences that Republican efforts to cut Medicaid by \$834 billion over the next ten years will have on community health centers and millions of Americans. This includes 4 in 10 children living in poverty nationwide, who currently receive care at community health centers.

Make no mistake: I strongly support an immediate long-term extension of CHIP and the Health Center Fund. Anything less in these uncertain times created by Republicans will simply not do. But, I will not sit by and categorize and prioritize children by program—every child matters to me.

Trumpcare harms children. The Trump budget doubles down on its cuts to programs for our nation's kids. So I urge my colleagues to first immediately reverse course, and preserve and strengthen the Medicaid program. Our nation's children deserve nothing less.

I yield the remainder of my time.

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