

North American Drama Therapy Association's Statement Concerning Health Care & Accessibility

The North American Drama Therapy Association joins our voice to many leading health and client advocacy groups calling on the United States Senate to reject the American Health Care Act bill which passed the House of Representatives on May 4th, 2017.

The House of Representatives passed this bill prior to receiving the [Congressional Budget's Office and Joint Committee on Taxation's \(CBO\) final report](#) on the bill's negative impact on the health care of the most vulnerable members of our society, including the analysis of significant amendments to the bill that further endanger millions of Americans' access to health care. According to the CBO Report, should this bill become law, as many as 24 million Americans would become uninsured in the next decade (with 14 million losing their insurance coverage as soon as 2018), and premiums will increase for older people, people with lower incomes, and people with pre-existing conditions. Of particular concern for drama therapists is that insurance plans may no longer be required to cover mental health, behavioral health, and substance use treatment.

Among the Bill's more concerning elements:

- **A \$834 Billion cut from Medicaid** over the next ten years, resulting in significant reductions in the amount of care provided — disproportionately affecting people with lower incomes, families, pregnant women, children and people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid for essential services
- Provisions to **allow states to not cover previously essential health benefits**, including mental health and substance abuse services
- **Removal or reduction of insurance premium protections for individuals based on age, income, geographic location, and pre-existing conditions in favor of less comprehensive protections based solely on age that reinforce regional, income, and health status disparities** and put more individuals at risk for being priced out of the insurance market
- Provisions that **reduce health care options** for [women, gender minorities](#), and [special education students in public schools](#)

We recognize that national and state-level health care policy is complex and that there are multiple perspectives on how best to create a balance between improving overall access and managing health care costs. But we feel this proposed legislation represents a critical misstep that stands to significantly disrupt our health care system with dire effects on our communities, our work as drama therapists, and on our most vulnerable clients.

The American Health Care Act bill fails to reflect a growing public consensus that equitable, affordable, and comprehensive health care should be available to all people regardless of wealth, location, gender, or health history.

As a professional mental health organization concerned with the wellbeing of our members, clients and communities , we encourage our members to speak up and contact their elected representatives in the Senate to make their desires and priorities known as the Senate prepares to respond to this proposed legislation. Participate in collective action within your communities. Connect your clients to resources and educate them about their own capacity to advocate for their own health care and rights. It is time for us to stand together and protect everyone's right to health care.

Contact your representatives directly by phone: <https://www.contactingcongress.org/>
Find a local organization engaging in health care advocacy and volunteer your time and energy.