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AAPCHO Responds to House ACA Repeal Proposal

WASHINGTON – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) today released the following statement, in response to the proposed bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) released in the House on Monday—urging Congress to consider the safety net impact of the legislation. The draft legislation would have a sweeping impact on the access, quality and cost of health care for millions of Americans, including Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (AA&NHPIs) and other vulnerable populations served by the nation’s community health centers.

“Health centers provide care to more than 25 million patients across the country, and have longstanding bipartisan support serving as the safety net for the most vulnerable in both our rural and urban communities,” said Jeffrey Caballero, executive director of AAPCHO. “As changes to the health care law are considered, we urge policymakers to ensure that any replacement plan continues the coverage these patients have today, and leads to increased access, better quality and lower costs for all Americans and the health care system overall.”

Medicaid funding is essential to our clinics. Among the provisions in the draft legislation are significant changes to the Medicaid program, which covers nearly half of all health center patients and is critical to supporting ongoing health center operations. Medicaid funding is essential to health centers’ ability to continue to provide comprehensive and cost-effective care to millions of Americans, including more than 1 million AA&NHPIs. The proposed bill would phase out Medicaid expansion and cap Medicaid spending. This reduction in funding would limit health centers’ capacity and place a greater burden on states, likely leading to reduced eligibility and coverage for at-risk Americans, including families and individuals with limited resources, a percentage of whom are limited English proficient.

As an organization that represents health centers serving nearly 500,000 medically underserved patients annually, AAPCHO and its members work to ensure a system of care that works for everyone and takes into account the diverse needs of AA&NHPI and all communities. We are concerned about the proposed bill’s provision to restrict access to tax credits for many lawfully present immigrant groups. Limiting tax credits to persons who are citizens or “qualified aliens” would mean that many immigrant groups with lawful status would be ineligible for financial assistance and may no longer be able to afford coverage. This includes Compact of Free Association migrants who have been consistently denied appropriate access to care. The ACA ushered in a new era, as more than 8 in 10 previously uninsured AA&NHPIs qualified for financial assistance. We are committed to ensuring that progress does not reverse.

“As the House begins markup on proposed legislation this week, we urge members to preserve and strengthen access to health care for AA&NHPIs and other underserved communities served at health centers nationwide,” Caballero added. “We are committed to working with policymakers on meaningful policy change that will ensure improved health and wellness for all Americans.”

About AAPCHO

AAPCHO is a national association of 35 community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. For more information on AAPCHO, please visit www.aapcho.org.

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