



AMA CEO: Before repealing ACA, offer replacement details

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The AMA welcomes legislative proposals that make insurance coverage “more affordable, provide greater choice and increase the number of those insured,” AMA Executive Vice President and CEO James L. Madara, MD, said in a Jan. 3 letter to House and Senate leadership.

Policy makers ought to provide “reasonable detail” about their replacement plan before moving to alter coverage provided under the Affordable Care Act, Dr. Madara wrote. “Patients and other stakeholders should be able to clearly compare current policy to new proposals so they can make informed decisions about whether it represents a step forward in the ongoing process of health reform.”

As policy makers consider systemic reforms designed to make insurance coverage more affordable and accessible, he added, “it is essential that gains in the number of Americans with health insurance coverage be maintained.”

The letter to Capitol Hill leaders comes as Congress prepares to repeal portions of the ACA through the budget reconciliation process. The AMA supported passage of the ACA “because it was a significant improvement on the status quo at the time,” Dr. Madara wrote, adding that “we continue to embrace the primary goal of that law—to make high quality, affordable health care coverage accessible to all Americans.”

Yet, Dr. Madara added, President Obama’s signature legislative achievement “is imperfect and there are a number of issues that need to be addressed.” The AMA looks forward to engaging lawmakers on proposals that are consistent with the Association’s vision for health care reform. That vision arises out of a comprehensive policy framework refined over two decades through the AMA House of Delegates, which is composed of representatives of more than 190 state and national specialty medical societies.

The AMA, Dr. Madara wrote, is ready to work with lawmakers to continue the “ongoing quest for improvement” that health system reform represents. Such work, he wrote, is intended to meet the goal of “ensuring that all Americans have access to high quality, affordable health coverage.”