

Iroquois Healthcare Alliance
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Dear Editor,

This week, Congress continued to unveil parts of their strategy to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). There appears to be universal agreement among policy insiders, lawmakers and the general public that replacing the legislation is a complex issue and may take years. But is anyone asking the question: how will an ACA repeal affect healthcare providers?

While the debate continues to rage, our hospitals must continue to provide high quality care, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. As we continue to face lingering threats of largely unknown, potentially massive changes to our healthcare system, it's important to focus on what we do know.

We know hospitals are here to stay, and we know that in many communities in Upstate New York, hospitals are the economic drivers.

We know that, according to the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYs), New York hospitals generate \$138 billion in economic activity—10% of the state's gross domestic product (GDP).

We know that New York hospitals are among the largest employers in every region of the state, directly and indirectly, generating more than 777,000 jobs annually.

We know that four of New York's top ten private sector employers are hospitals and health systems.

We know New York's private, non-profit hospitals provide free care, financial assistance, and other community health improvement programs that cost \$7.8 billion—13.4% of their total expenses.

We know that when the ACA was originally negotiated and implemented hospitals across the nation agreed to a series of cuts in order to help fund the required coverage increases and programs. Under the agreement, New York State hospitals are being cut over \$24 billion between 2016-2025.

We know in the Iroquois Healthcare region alone, the total amount of cuts to our 54 member hospitals is over \$2.4 billion.

We know the total amount of cuts to hospitals in Central New York is over \$844 million.

We know the total amount of cuts to hospitals in the Capital Region is over \$826 million.

We know the total amount of cuts to hospitals in the Southern Tier is nearly \$340 million.

We know the total amount of cuts to hospitals in the Mohawk Valley is over \$230 million.

We know the total amount of cuts to hospitals in the North Country is nearly \$160 million.

We know that the Urban Institute report, "The Cost of ACA Repeal," estimates that NY state alone would lose \$57B in federal Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program dollars.

We know that Governor Cuomo estimates a repeal will cost upstate New York counties nearly \$163 million and we know in New York State county finances have a direct impact on our property taxes.

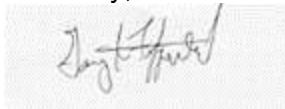
We know that the key moments in our lives are most often dictated by our health, and the health of our families and friends—the births and deaths of our loved ones, the illnesses and disease that we courageously battle or luckily avoid.

We know that these tremendous milestones and markers in our lives most often are experienced in a hospital, where care is never denied.

While the questions continue to go unanswered, we know that patients in our Upstate hospitals will never go untreated.

And, most importantly, we know that repealing the ACA without an immediate replacement plan that restores the cuts already sustained by New York's hospitals is unacceptable and irresponsible.

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Gary J. Fitzgerald".

Gary J. Fitzgerald, President
Iroquois Healthcare Alliance