



Protecting Coverage & Access to Health Care

Position: The Epilepsy Foundation strongly opposes efforts to repeal provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) that would again leave people living with epilepsy with enormous challenges in obtaining health care. **We support access to quality health care that is affordable and comprehensive, and that meets the needs of individuals with serious and chronic health conditions.** The ACA allowed millions of individuals – many who had been unable to access health insurance in the past because of denials and exclusions for pre-existing conditions, as well as unaffordable premiums – to gain meaningful access to quality and affordable care.

About Epilepsy: The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of more than 3 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime.

Background: The Epilepsy Foundation had been supportive of health care reform for many years and strongly advocated for enactment of the ACA. We have continually supported successful implementation of the law and engage with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on the rules promulgated to implement the law. We work to ensure that the spirit of the law is honored, especially meaningful coverage for services, providers, and therapies, regardless of health status; and prohibitions on discriminatory plan designs.

The Epilepsy Foundation will remain active in ensuring that individuals living with chronic health conditions are not still facing barriers to care, including discriminatory benefit designs that limit access, such as restrictive formularies and inadequate provider networks; high cost-sharing; and a lack of plan transparency that may deprive consumers of information that is essential to making informed enrollment choices.

It is of particular importance to our community that insurers are prohibited from denying coverage or determining costs based on an individual's pre-existing conditions or medical history. In the past, insurers had consistently failed to adequately cover the medications and services individuals with epilepsy needed for successful treatment. Epilepsy medications and neurologists were either not included at all or had significant copayment or coinsurance requirements.

Without access to care, consequences are devastating for both the individuals with epilepsy and their families, as well as for the overall health care system – deteriorating health leads to higher health costs.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Angela Ostrom, Chief Legal Officer & Vice President Public Policy at aostrom@efa.org or 301-918-3766.