



## **Children's Health at Risk:** ***Republicans are Gambling with the Health of Children***

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), 95 percent of America's children now have health coverage. ACA also strengthened benefits and protections for children which contribute to better health outcomes. Further, a healthy childhood is linked to improved well-being, learning, and behavior across a child's life span. Efforts to repeal the ACA, dismantle the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or slash Medicaid funding leave our nation's children vulnerable.

### ***These attacks would threaten the health and well-being of children by:***

- **Taking away health coverage.** Between 2013 and 2015 – the first two years of the ACA's coverage expansion – the country experienced the [largest two-year decline in the uninsured rate for all children](#) on record. One of the most effective strategies for coverage expansion has been the Medicaid expansion "welcome mat" which extends coverage to parents and other low-income adults, thereby increasing likelihood of coverage for the entire family. *Repeal of the ACA would leave 4 million children without coverage, more than doubling the child uninsured rate by 2019; [up to 9 million more children could lose coverage if states lower Medicaid or CHIP eligibility.](#)*
- **Endangering access to vital preventive services.** Through the ACA, essential child health preventive services, such as immunizations and screenings for autism, must be covered in health plans at no cost. *Repeal of the ACA would limit access to preventive services that are important for the healthy growth and development of children.*
- **Limiting access to mental health services, particularly those provided at school.** The ACA ensures health plans cover mental health services. Children on Medicaid also rely heavily on mental health services provided at school, such as mental health screenings. *Repeal of the ACA and cuts to Medicaid would restrict access to these vital mental health services that can lead to safer classrooms and homes.*
- **Threatening coverage for children with pre-existing conditions.** [Up to 17 million children have a pre-existing condition](#). Through the ACA, children with pre-existing conditions, such as asthma, cannot be denied coverage or be charged higher premiums. *Repeal would once again make health coverage unaffordable or too expensive for these children and their families.*
- **Reinstating annual and lifetime caps on health benefits.** Thanks to the ACA, children with serious or chronic illnesses and conditions that require expensive treatments are no longer subject to annual or lifetime caps on benefits. *Repeal of the ACA would leave families with children susceptible to paying unlimited out-of-pocket costs for health care.*
- **Hampering services for students with disabilities.** Medicaid funds a variety of school-based specialized instructional services for students with disabilities, such as occupational and speech therapy and rehabilitation services. *Cuts to Medicaid, whether through per capita caps, block grant or other harmful reforms, threaten these services and will put the education and development of children with disabilities at risk.*