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## ***House bill jeopardizes health for women and rural Iowans National reports pinpoint issues with loss of the Medicaid expansion***

IOWA CITY, Iowa (March 16, 2017) — The House plan to cap and cut Medicaid — and effectively end the Medicaid expansion — will have a disproportionate impact on women and hinder coverage as well in rural communities.

Two new reports by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) illustrate the challenges as attention turns to the Senate. Of particular note is the threat to the expansion of Medicaid in Iowa and 30 other states to low-income adults previously not covered.

“Previous analysis has shown the Medicaid expansion currently assures coverage to as many as 150,000 Iowans. The call to ‘repeal and replace’ the Affordable Care Act is a hollow one in that we have yet to see a replacement that protects access to health care to this vulnerable population,” said Mike Owen, executive director of the nonpartisan Iowa Policy Project (IPP), part of the Iowa Fiscal Partnership (IFP).

A summary by IFP and CBPP of the previous House Republican plan had estimated that the earlier House Republican plan not only would cut health coverage, but also cut taxes for the wealthy while making health care more expensive for poor and rural Iowans. The report noted the Congressional Budget Office had projected the plan would wipe out all gains in health coverage achieved under the ACA.

The new reports by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities — last week on women’s coverage and Tuesday on rural communities — clarify the challenges further. (See links to the CBPP reports below.)

Not only do women make up a majority of Iowa’s Medicaid beneficiaries, but they also are the primary users of family planning and maternity benefits, and are more likely to use Medicaid’s long-term services, CBPP analysts reported.

“The Medicaid expansion loss alone is critical for women, even though it is not the only impact,” Owen said. According to the analysis, women are 54.6 percent of the Medicaid population in Iowa, but 50.4 percent of the total population of the state. In addition, the report stated, 40 percent of total births in Iowa in 2010 were covered by Medicaid.

CBPP’s report Tuesday notes that Medicaid “has long played an essential role in delivering health care in rural America.” It also notes that the rural share of the 11 million people — 14 percent — who gained coverage through the Medicaid expansion is greater than the rural makeup of the population as a whole (12 percent).

Iowa is among the eight Medicaid expansion states where more than one-third of expansion enrollees live in rural areas, the report stated. It estimates 61,600 — or 44 percent of all expansion enrollees in Iowa — live in rural areas.

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“If rural health matters, then clearly the Medicaid expansion needs to be a priority and not an afterthought tossed aside for political purposes,” Owen said.

The Iowa Fiscal Partnership (IFP) is a joint initiative of the Iowa Policy Project and another nonpartisan organization, the Child & Family Policy Center in Des Moines. Iowa Fiscal Partnership reports are at <http://www.iowafiscal.org>.

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For more information, see:

*Interactive map with county-by-county and congressional district breakdown of Medicaid expansion enrollment (January 2017)* <http://www.iowapolicyproject.org/2017Research/170325-ACA-MedicaidExp.html>

*IFP backgrounder, “Replacing ACA: What You Need to Know About the AHCA.”* March 16, 2017. <http://www.iowapolicyproject.org/2017docs/170316-acha-bgd.pdf>

*Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report: “House-Passed Bill Would Devastate Health Care in Rural America,”* May 16, 2017. <http://www.cbpp.org/research/health/house-passed-bill-would-devastate-health-care-in-rural-america>

*Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report: “Medicaid Works for Women — But Proposed Cuts Would Have Harsh, Disproportionate Impact,”* May 11, 2017. <http://www.cbpp.org/research/health/medicaid-works-for-women-but-proposed-cuts-would-have-harsh-disproportionate-impact>