

## ***The Better Care Reconciliation Act (BHCA) is Bad for Contra Costa***

**By Patricia Tanquary  
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Medicaid has been the backbone of health coverage for more than 74 million Americans. Nearly 20 million of them receive services through Safety Net Health Plans such as the Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP).

Medicaid is not a distant program that benefits any one group of people. It helps Americans across all demographics – racially, economically and generationally. Medicaid is US.

About one in four Contra Costa residents –more than 275,000 people – receive health care coverage through Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid program. These are people that now have access to regular medical visits, treatment for chronic diseases and life-saving interventions.

Unfortunately, the United States Senate has put our neighbors and millions of other lives at risk with the counterproductive gutting of Medicaid proposed under the Better Care Reconciliation Act.

The BCRA moves America's healthcare system and our entire economy in a dangerous direction. The Senate bill would phase out Medicaid coverage for millions of Americans and threaten the viability of the Medicaid system, meaning reduced services, less people with coverage and job losses.

Medicaid isn't welfare. It benefits working Americans. Almost 60 percent of adults with Medicaid coverage are already working. Nearly half of them work for small businesses with fewer than 50 employees. Medicaid is essential for hardworking Americans to stay healthy.

When I think about what Medicaid means to our county, I think about Annette Harris, one of our members. Annette was 57 and uninsured in 2015 when she first visited our emergency department at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center because her chronic sciatica pain became unbearable.

We treated Annette's pain and we helped her enroll in Medi-Cal, which probably saved her life.

Annette's new doctor assigned her a routine mammogram at her first checkup – her first doctor's visit in many years – and today Annette is a survivor of early-stage breast cancer. Without expanded Medicaid, Annette would never have gotten that checkup.

At CCHP, we joined the campaign *Medicaid is US* because we feel a moral obligation to the patients we serve to maintain their access to high-quality, affordable healthcare.

The California Department of Health Care Services recently released its analysis of the BCRA, and estimates that the cost to California would be nearly \$3 billion in 2020, with the annual cost growing to \$30.3 billion by 2027. This impact would be catastrophic to people's health and our economy.

That is why we have focused on the impact of Medicaid on the health of our community and economic well-being. At every point in our lives, Medicaid is there to ensure that we and our loved ones have the health security they need to maintain their economic security.

Medicaid belongs to everyone and benefits everyone. In this debate, there is no us and them. There is only us.

Read more about how Medicaid has helped our patients at [cchealth.org](http://cchealth.org).

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