LWVUS Social Policy Position on Health Care: Support for a basic level of quality care at an affordable cost for all US residents.

President Trump and Congressional Republicans vowed to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2017 as a first order of business.

The Urban Institute reported repeal of the ACA would mean an estimated 1.2 million people in Illinois would lose health insurance by 2019. Illinois has 3 million on Medicaid including 700,000 on ACA Expanded Medicaid covering disabled, seniors, low-income adults and families with children, rural and children’s hospitals. The prospect of changes to Medicaid structure, as block grants, would put Illinois in a precarious position given the dire financial status. Moderate-income families in the ACA Marketplace would risk losing cost sharing subsidies, an average deduction of 61%.

2017 Bills to Repeal ACA
1) House American Health Care Act: Introduced 3/20; 5/4 Passed as Amended 217-213; 13 Republicans opposed  
Provisions: eliminates ACA individual and employer mandates, lowers deficit by cutting Medicaid, would result in 24 million people eventually losing coverage, increases premiums for older adults, women and persons with pre-existing conditions, guts essential health benefits as maternity care, prescription drugs and mental health care.

2) Senate Better Care Reconciliation Act 2017: Failed to pass 7/28 49-51 Senators Collins, Murkowski, McCain opposed  
LWVVUS Statement called the bill worse than the house version and “not worthy of this great nation. This a nasty bill that will hurt millions of Americans.” It essentially defunds Medicaid, gives tax breaks to the wealthiest individuals and large corporations.

3) Senate Graham/Cassidy Amendment introduced 9/13 failed to come to vote  
Provisions: Repeals the structure and architecture of the ACA and replaces it with a block grant given annually to the states.

League Activity 2017

LWVIL joined Protect Our Care Illinois (PoCIL), a Coalition of advocacy and social service groups to lobby for “no repeal of ACA without adequate replacement.” Letters were sent to Leagues in Congressional Districts with representatives supporting repeal. Members were asked to engage with them during the February recess through personal meetings, rallies and social media.

Leagues organized Q and A Public Forums in the 14th District (Hultgren) and 16th (Kinzinger), two of seven IL representatives who supported straight repeal of the ACA. Rep. Roskam (6th District) refused to participate in a public meeting organized by Leagues in his District.

May
TFA: Contact targeted U.S. Representatives to commit to a bill that is an acceptable and genuine replacement for ACA. Also call Governor Rauner asking him to reinforce
with IL Congressional Delegation the dire effects that a repeal without adequate replacement would have on Illinois financial status.

**June**
**TFA:** Contact Governor to send a strong message to members of U.S. Congress, particularly the Illinois delegation, to refrain from voting for cuts to Medicaid benefits.

**Leaders Update:** Advocacy information and strategies for local league on potential Senate bill.

**Testimony: House Appropriations Human Services Committee 6/20**
Margaret O’Hara, LWVIL Health Care Issue Specialist, testified on a panel of nurses in support of HR 445 opposing the American Health Care Act. She cited experience with the financial devastation and lack of appropriate care suffered by patients with preexisting conditions and inadequate insurance. The panel called out the Governor on no cuts to Medicaid.

**July**
**TFA:** Contact Governor Rauner to publicly oppose cuts to Medicaid in any legislation to repeal, replace or modify ACA.

**Sign on** to organizational letter to Governor to oppose ACA repeal.

**August**
**Drive For Our Lives** national bus tour stop in Chicago for Press Conference and Rally by Health Coalition partners.

**September**
**TFA:** Contact Governor to oppose Graham-Cassidy proposal.

**Sign on** to organizational letter to Illinois Congressional Delegation to renew CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program) that covers 325,000 IL children; expires 9/30.

**October**
**Sign on** to letter to Illinois Congressional Delegation to renew CHIP and Maternal Infant Home Visiting Program; added to Facebook and Twitter.

**Sign on** to letter to Medicare and Medical Services opposing ACA healthcare.gov weekend shutdowns for maintenance and shortened enrollment period.

**Outlook:**
1) LWVIL will continue health care advocacy with PoCIL.
2) Further efforts to weaken ACA and Medicaid by executive action and new Tax law.
3) Proposed structural changes to Medicaid (e.g. Block Grant) detrimental to IL because of state’s precarious financial status and the 3 million enrollees.
4) Monitor outcome of Republican agreement with Sen. Susan Collins: legislation to stabilize ACA markets will be passed, a condition of her voting for tax law.
Reproductive Health

PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES - Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. President Trump and Congressional Republicans vowed to repeal the Affordable Care Act as a first order of business in 2017. The ACA required Reproductive Health services including contraception, resulting in a Supreme Court case. A group of religious non-profits challenged employer provision of contraceptives. A divided court returned the case to lower courts for resolution. In May President Trump ended the impasse by issuing an Executive Order exempting religious employers from providing contraception. The appointment of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court eliminated the even numbered court, opening speculation on future rulings on reproductive health.

League Activity 2017

HB 40: LWVIL worked with the Reproductive Health and Access Coalition to pass. The law removed a trigger in 1975 Illinois abortion law should Roe v Wade be struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court; permits abortion funding for Medicaid and state employees. After bill passed both houses in May, a motion to reconsider was filed, a procedural maneuver to allow time for further advocacy. Although the Governor had indicated he would veto the bill, he ultimately signed it into law, prompting strong opposition.

SB1564 Healthcare Right of Conscience Act became law July 2016: amends Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act to ensure a patient’s right to medically accurate and complete information, including a referral even though a provider has religious or moral objections. The next month the U.S. District Court ruled against enforcement of the law due to start January 1, 2017. More litigation followed, allowing a Rockford clinic temporary relief from the law’s provisions. Currently five lawsuits are pending and a complaint filed with the DHHS Office of Civil Rights on behalf of a clinic in Sterling, IL. LWVIL monitored the following bills restricting abortion. None came to a vote.

Outlook:
1) Expect continued efforts in Illinois, nationally to limit or ban abortion.
2) Potential change in Supreme Court rulings for Reproductive Health with full complement of 9 justices.
3) Weakening of the ACA and Medicaid by executive action, and new Tax law.
4) Proposed structural changes to Medicaid (e.g. block grant): detrimental to IL because of state’s precarious financial status and 3 million Illinois citizens enrolled. Medicaid covers 50% of IL births, 75% family planning services.