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News for Immediate Release

April 2, 2019

Auditor General DePasquale, Health Advocates Warn Legal Attack on Affordable Care Act Puts Millions at Risk, Poses Budget Disaster

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today joined public health advocates to warn that the Trump Administration’s latest legal attack on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will affect nearly all Americans and create a budget disaster for Pennsylvania.

“Dismantling the ACA would throw the nation’s health care system into chaos, leave millions of Americans without access to needed care and blow a \$5 billion hole in Pennsylvania’s budget,” DePasquale said. “It would also have a devastating impact on the more than 2 million Pennsylvania residents living with pre-existing medical conditions whose continued coverage is ensured by the ACA.”

DePasquale cautioned that people living with pre-existing conditions such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and complex medical conditions could be unable to get health insurance if the ACA is struck down. “Even pregnant women could lose health care coverage,” he noted.

“The Affordable Care Act is making health care coverage more widely available and has helped more than 1.1 million Pennsylvania residents obtain coverage,” DePasquale said. “The number of Pennsylvanians without health insurance was cut nearly in half between 2013 and 2017.”

“Congress should build upon what is working to improve health care for people by putting aside partisan bickering to strengthen the law to help better control health care costs. Dismantling the ACA would be devastating to millions of Pennsylvanians and create a budget disaster for the state,” he said.

Eliminating the ACA would negatively impact the more than 800,000 Pennsylvania residents who, thanks to the law, now qualify to receive health coverage through Medicaid. In 2017, Pennsylvania received over \$5.6 billion in federal funding to pay for the expanded Medicaid coverage.

DePasquale said that 365,888 Pennsylvanians are currently covered by so-called marketplace plans offered through the state’s health insurance exchange. An estimated 86 percent of those individuals qualify for tax credits or subsidies that help to reduce their premium costs. If the ACA is overturned, those premium subsidies could vanish.

In addition, 89,000 young adults in Pennsylvania could lose the ability to remain covered by their parents’ health plans until age 26, according to the state Insurance Department.

“I’m deeply concerned that the Trump Administration and its allies are attacking the ACA without a backup plan of any kind,” DePasquale said. “Congress repeatedly tried and failed to replace the law in 2017, in part because no one has yet developed a better approach.”

DePasquale was joined today by representatives of the Little Lobbyists, the RASE Project, the Centers for Independent Living, SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania and medical professionals. To learn more about the Department of the Auditor General, visit www.PaAuditor.gov.

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