

Resolution Number: 3

Submitted by: The Honorable Mayor Martin J. Walsh, City of Boston

RESOLUTION REGARDING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

WHEREAS, Health care in this country should be viewed by all as a human right, not a privilege available only to those who can afford access to quality healthcare.

WHEREAS, Mayors share a responsibility for the health and well-being of our communities, which includes ensuring access to comprehensive and affordable health care; a robust and coordinated system of care that aligns community health centers, hospitals, local health departments and other providers; walkable/bikeable neighborhoods; easy access to public transit and open space; and affordable healthy foods.

WHEREAS, Health care in Washington has become too partisan and too political. The debate should be reoriented to stay true to the promise of quality coverage at the lowest cost possible for all Americans.

WHEREAS, We must not go back to the days when millions of people with no access to healthcare have to resort to using emergency rooms as their primary health care option.

WHEREAS, Millions of Americans have gained insurance under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and the law has been instrumental in bringing about insurance reforms from which we all benefit.

WHEREAS, Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), coverage through Medicaid increased from about 17.9 percent to about 21.8 percent, coverage in the individual market climbed from around 3.5 percent to around 4.9 percent (including both ACA exchange and off-exchange policies), and the total number of uninsured individuals in the U.S. dropped from around 13.6 percent to around 8.8 percent.

WHEREAS, The ACA has improved the lives of many Americans and more should be done to strengthen the program and guarantee affordable health care coverage.

WHEREAS, Every effort must be made to preserve patient protections and increase access to mental health and substance use disorder benefits.

WHEREAS, State and local governments have been vocal and bipartisan in their support for Medicaid. Any new proposal must protect the millions of Americans who rely on Medicaid or state exchanges without passing the cost on to state and local government.

WHEREAS Personal bankruptcy filings have fallen 50% from 2010 to 2016, and many bankruptcy and legal experts agree that medical bills were a leading cause of personal bankruptcy before public health care coverage expanded under the ACA.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors calls on Congress and the President to ensure that any health care proposal reduces long-term growth of healthcare costs for individuals, businesses and government; protects families from bankruptcy or debt driven by health care costs; guarantees choice of doctors and health plans; invests in prevention and wellness; improves patient safety and quality of care; assures affordable, quality health coverage for all Americans; includes comprehensive mental health and substance use disorder treatment options; maintains coverage when someone changes or loses a job; and ends barriers to coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that there are important provisions of the ACA, which have bipartisan support, are working well, and should be retained in any legislation related to our health care system including:

- Guaranteed coverage for those with pre-existing conditions and the elderly;
- Maintained funding for Medicaid without block granting it to the States;
- Elimination of lifetime and annual limits;
- Included coverage for essential health benefits, including: Ambulatory Patient Care, Prescription Drugs, Emergency Care, Mental Health Services, Rehabilitation, Prevention and Wellness, Lab Services, Pediatric Care, and Maternity and Newborn Care;
- Allowances for children to remain on their parents' health plan up to age 26;
- Support for efforts to prevent infectious diseases and chronic illnesses by fully funding the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF); and
- Provisions for coverage for preventive services at no additional cost.