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OFFICE *of the* STATE COMPTROLLER
55 Elm Street
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May 24, 2017

Honorable Chris Murphy
United States Senator
136 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murphy:

The American Health Care Act recently passed by the House of Representatives, and proposals now under consideration by Republican Senators, are not health care reform – but an immoral and outrageous attack on millions of Americans who would lose access to health care, all to provide tax breaks to billionaires.

I'm grateful for your strong leadership – and commend your demand that Democrats participate in ongoing deliberations on health care reform, especially for the 800,000 Connecticut residents at risk of losing health care.

Today, I am calling for a Medicare option for all that would deliver comprehensive, high quality health care coverage to millions of Americans, not just seniors, and especially those being gouged by skyrocketing and unaffordable premiums. I offer my support to any efforts you may be pursuing to make this a reality.

The Republican American Health Care Act would unconscionably allow states to end protections for people with pre-existing condition, cut subsidies to help people pay for premiums and allow insurers to charge even higher rates. Millions will lose health care coverage because they can't afford it. Expanding Medicare could prevent this devastating outcome.

I believe a Medicare option for all would be the most ideal solution – however, at a minimum, a Medicare buy-in option for Americans from at least age 55 is essential to ensuring people continue to have access to quality and affordable health care coverage.

Expanding Medicare to at least age 55 would lower costs for people buying insurance through their state individual market and it would also lower the average cost of Medicare by adding younger participants to that pool.

Regardless of the outcome of ongoing federal health care debate, this proposed Medicare reform would help stabilize costs in Connecticut's individual insurance market, lower premiums and expand the number of people insured.

In the meantime, at the state level, I am also calling for the development of a public option, a state sponsored health care option available on the exchange, to ensure that Connecticut residents have access to a high quality affordable insurance plan – to fill the void in the absence of federal action to expand Medicare.

At the federal level, a Medicare expansion, even one limited to individuals age 55 to 64, would not only improve access the health care coverage for the newly eligible population, but also for younger Americans purchasing insurance through state health exchanges. Premiums in state health exchanges would reduce drastically if 55 to 64 year olds were able to access coverage through Medicare.

The result will be significantly lower average premiums, which in turn will allow more people to afford coverage, lower the number of people who are uninsured and improve the health and well-being of all.

Thank you again for your advocacy on these important issues. I am committed to work with you to the benefit of our state and the people we represent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Lembo".

Kevin Lembo
State Comptroller