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STATEMENT BY THE GEORGIA COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ON THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT (H.R. 1628)

The mission of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities is to advance social change, public policy, and innovative practices that increase opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and families to thrive where they live, learn, work, play and worship in Georgia's communities. GCDD issues this statement of serious concern with the vote on the American Health Care Act (AHCA) that passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 217-213 on Thursday, May 4, 2017.

GCDD's Statement on AHCA

The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities issues this statement of serious concern with the vote on the American Health Care Act (AHCA) that passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 217-213 on Thursday, May 4, 2017.

The passage of the AHCA shows a disregard for ensuring that people with disabilities have access to comprehensive, affordable, quality, non-discriminatory coverage and benefits in healthcare. Furthermore, it decimates the Medicaid program by cutting the program by \$880 billion dollars. The restructuring and cuts to the Medicaid program are devastating to people with disabilities. Under the cap and cut proposal, the federal government will no longer share in the costs of providing healthcare services and community services beyond the capped amount. In addition, it ends the Medicaid expansion earlier, and instead offers only Medicaid block grants to states.

The amendments added to pass the AHCA are particularly harmful to people with pre-existing health conditions. The AHCA allows states to seek waivers that would result in higher premiums charged to people with pre-existing conditions, including people with disabilities. This means that under AHCA states would be able to seek waivers from the ACA requirement to provide essential health benefits, including crucial services for people with disabilities such as mental health and substance use disorder services, prescription drugs, rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices, preventative and wellness services and chronic disease management, and pediatric services. The \$8 billion fund created to assist states in covering high risk pools is not sufficient to ensure that people with pre-existing conditions have adequate coverage. High risk pools have been shown by a range of experts to not be effective in addressing the needs of this population.

The cumulative impact of the passage of the AHCA makes it nearly impossible for people with pre-existing conditions, including people with disabilities, to meet their basic health care service needs. With passage of this legislation, many people with disabilities will lose the short-term and/or long-term care that they need to go to school, or go to work, or to live at home.





The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities will continue to work to ensure that every person with a disability has comprehensive, affordable, quality, non-discriminatory coverage and benefits for their healthcare as well as the long-term supports that ensures life living and working as contributing members of their community. We look forward to working with the Senate as they consider how to improve healthcare and Medicaid programs.

Sincerely

Eric E Jacobson & Mitzi Proffitt
GCDD Executive Director and Chairperson