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USHRN Joins the UN Special Rapporteur: The Proposed ACA Repeal is a Violation of Human Rights



Last Thursday's passage of the Republican health care plan in the House is devastating. Already marginalized communities, including communities of color, the poor, elderly, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, women, and immigrants will be most impacted by the plan. The scale of the damage that the American Health Care Act (AHCA) would cause is huge: an estimated 30 million people in the U.S. would be negatively impacted.

The human right to health is not just a catchphrase - it is an internationally recognized human right. In addition to stating that everyone has the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health - retrogressive measures, such as those proposed by the AHCA that repeal core elements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), are not permissible. It was news to some when the [Washington Post](#) leaked that the [UN Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health](#) had sent a confidential [urgent appeal](#) about the possible repeal of the ACA as a violation of human rights to the Trump Administration back in February.

The US Human Rights Network (USHRN), along with our members of grassroots communities and the most vulnerable who are directly impacted by the injustices of the health care system, have long been working to ensure health care as a human right and fully support this statement by the United Nations. Longtime USHRN member organizations, such as the [Vermont Workers' Center](#) and the [National Economic and Social Rights Initiative \(NESRI\)](#) have been organizing grassroots communities to ensure and uplift the human right to health care.

As USHRN member Suraj Madoori, Senior Health Policy Officer at the Treatment Action Group shared, "HIV advocates and people living with HIV... [have] already been using [the UN Statement as a] useful tool in galvanizing attention on the ACA repeal as a human rights issue, and still a lot that can be done with it."

Michelle Erenberg, the Executive Director of [Lift Louisiana](#), an organization that defends and advocates for reproductive rights and a new member of USHRN, warned that the ACA repeal would "put women's health and economic security in dire jeopardy."

The ACA isn't perfect: USHRN's [2015 Advancing Human Rights report card](#) gave the U.S. an overall grade of D on health care. But repealing it would strip essential benefits for many vulnerable people in the U.S. The ACA has literally saved lives, and its repeal would likewise violate the human right to life for many.



Healthcare		
United States Civil Society SUMMARY		
	OVERALL GRADE	D
Healthcare is a fundamental human right, and the United States has a long history of providing access to healthcare for all. However, the current administration's policies are undermining this right, particularly for vulnerable populations. The following table summarizes the findings of our research.		
Access to healthcare for all	C-	F
Healthcare costs and financial burden	C+	D
Healthcare quality and safety	F	F
Healthcare workforce	F	F
Healthcare equity and disparities	C	F

We must hold our elected officials accountable for their duty to respect and protect the human right to health. Part of the UN's communication asked for the letter to be "shared with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the majority and the minority leaders at the House as well as the majority and minority leaders at the Senate." Despite the Department of Health and Human Services eventually getting the letter, according to the Washington Post's inquiries, none of these officials were aware of it.

As the Trump Administration continues to strip away not only the human right to health care, but other human rights in the United States, the US Human Rights Network and our members will continue to stand together to build a people centered human rights movements and hold our government accountable for its human rights violations

and to its obligations to progressively realize the full spectrum of human rights.

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ABOUT THE US HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK

The US Human Rights Network is a national network of organizations and individuals working to strengthen a human rights movement and culture within the United States led by the people most directly impacted by human rights violations. USHRN works to realize human rights by engaging, connecting and mobilizing communities to uphold and defend human rights and hold government accountable, building the capacity and leadership of grassroots groups, facilitating effective collective action to secure the long-term structural change to achieve justice and fully realize human rights, and raising the visibility of local human rights concerns nationally, and internationally.

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