



STATEMENT FROM U.S. SEN. BOB CASEY

on health care coverage for people with pre-existing conditions

The PA Breast Cancer Coalition interviewed U.S. Sen. Bob Casey regarding critical health care issues affecting breast cancer survivors in Pennsylvania. This is what he had to say on health care coverage for people with pre-existing conditions like breast cancer:

“The big issue for the country is whether or not we’re going to be faithful to what we already did which was to say, at long last, a pre-existing condition, especially a pre-existing condition like breast cancer, is no longer going to be a bar or an impediment to treatment and to coverage. I don’t want to hear politicians talk about access to coverage. We want coverage. Full coverage for pre-existing conditions which of course would include breast cancer.”

Sen. Casey’s office also released the following statement regarding the current status of health care in our country:

President Trump and Congressional Republicans recently gathered in the White House Rose Garden to celebrate the U.S. House of Representatives’ passage of legislation that will cause 14 million people to lose their health care coverage next year. This would be the largest one-year decline in health care coverage in our Nation’s recorded history, which begs the question of what exactly there is to celebrate. In fact, the American Health Care Act (AHCA), the cause of the Republican festivities, is a testament to broken promises. Despite the President’s commitments as a candidate, the Republican House bill he supports and celebrates would return us to the days when insurers could discriminate against people for any number of reasons – including many reasons that affect women, such as being of childbearing age or being a breast cancer survivor.

Under the House-passed bill, as soon as next year, health insurance premiums would rise an average of about 20 percent in the individual insurance market. The guarantee of nationwide protections, such as the provisions prohibiting discrimination based on pre-existing conditions and ensuring that these plans cover maternity care, would end. Also in danger is the nationwide requirement that plans cap out-of-pocket costs (such as co-pays and deductibles) for essential health benefits and cover preventive care, including mammograms and contraception. Instead, under the AHCA, states could waive benefit requirements while allowing insurers to discriminate against women simply for being female. Insurers would be able to charge 30 percent more to anyone whose coverage lapsed for 63 days or more, or states could request a waiver to allow insurers to set premiums based on health status for individuals with a coverage lapse.* The tax credits would also be less generous than under current law, and these policies combined could rapidly make health insurance unaffordable for individuals with preexisting conditions.

With key protections waived, many women can expect to see severe spikes in their out-of-pocket costs for health care services, in addition to the already huge increases they could see in their insurance premiums. Non-partisan experts estimate these out-of-pocket increases could be thousands of dollars a year for some people. There is nothing to celebrate but plenty to fear from the Trump Administration and Congressional Republican health care scheme. I will continue to fight like hell against any proposal that causes costs to skyrocket and does not protect people with preexisting conditions. Pennsylvania women deserve much better.

* Under the bill passed by the U.S. House, insurers would be able to charge people 30 percent more if they lose their health insurance for 63 days or more. People with pre-existing conditions like breast cancer could be charged much more for their insurance.