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Senate version of Medicaid-slashing ACA repeal even more harmful to Californians

OAKLAND, CA, June 22, 2017 - The California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAPH) says the legislation proposed by the United States Senate to repeal the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion and cut the Medicaid program overall would be even more damaging to patients, communities and providers than the "American Health Care Act," which passed the House of Representatives in May.

"Despite some minor changes, the Senate language still defunds the Medicaid expansion, which could leave millions of Californians without adequate coverage, and would still impose a disastrous cap on federal Medicaid spending, leading to huge program cuts," said CAPH President and CEO Erica Murray. "The phase-down is slightly longer, but the cuts are even more massive, and the results would still be devastating."

CAPH represents California's 21 public health care systems, which make up the heart of the state's health care safety net, operating in 15 counties where 80% of the state's population lives. These county-owned and operated facilities and University of California medical centers together account for just 6% of the state's hospitals but provide care to 35% of Medicaid (Medi-Cal) beneficiaries in the communities they serve, and would be disproportionately affected by cuts to the Medi-Cal program. They operate half of California's top level trauma and burn centers, train more than half of all new doctors in the state, and provide more than 75,000 jobs.

California's public health care systems together could lose more than \$2 billion per year in revenue if the Medicaid expansion is repealed, and billions more over time because of the cap on federal Medicaid spending. The State of California estimates that by year ten under the spending cap, these cuts would leave a statewide budget hole of more than \$18 billion.

"This bill is a heartless and futile effort to save money. But simply refusing to spend money on health care does not reduce the cost of it, nor the need," said Murray. "The legislation is a massive and unbearable cost-shift to state and local governments, providers, and patients - especially our most vulnerable - all of whom will suffer as a result."

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