

# Key Concerns About ACA Repeal and its Impact on Hepatitis B

Up to 2.2 million Americans are chronically infected with HBV—the most common serious liver infection and the deadliest vaccine-preventable disease in the world. Without diagnosis or intervention, 1 in 4 chronically infected with HBV will develop liver failure or liver cancer. Many will die prematurely due to cirrhosis or liver cancer – the second deadliest cancer in the U.S. with a five-year survival rate of less than 15%.

**The ongoing efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will create a greater financial burden on our health care system and for people living with or at risk for hepatitis B (HBV). Hep B United urges the Senate to vote NO on the Cassidy-Graham repeal bill!**

Hep B United is deeply concerned about the ACA repeal bill, primarily for these reasons:

1. Changing Medicaid to a per capita cap model and repealing ACA cost sharing subsidies would impact millions of Americans' ability to access health care.
2. Changing the structure of Medicaid to be controlled by the states would limit the amount of funding states receive and affect funding given to key health entities that serve patients living with hepatitis B, such as federally-qualified health centers.
3. Eliminating federal matching dollars for Medicaid expansion and Essential Health Benefit requirements will make it harder (and less likely) for state Medicaid programs to cover preventive services such as hepatitis B screening and vaccination.
4. The bill eliminates the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), which is a major source of funding for immunization activities and infrastructure, including efforts to prevent hepatitis and liver cancer through screening, vaccination, and linkage to care programs. PPHF also supports the CDC's Section 317 Immunization Program, which helps state and local health departments purchase and supply vaccines to populations in need:
  - a. Vaccines purchased through the Section 317 Immunization Program have played a critical role in HBV prevention.
  - b. PPHF funding for this program helps ensure that infants at risk of contracting HBV from their infected mothers can be identified and provided with the HBV vaccine and treatment at birth.
  - c. PPHF funding also supports the Vaccines for Children Program, vaccine effectiveness studies, disease surveillance, outbreak detection and response, vaccine coverage assessment, vaccine safety and provider education programming, community linkages, and screening activities.
5. The bill limits tax credits to persons who are citizens or "qualified aliens," leaving out many immigrant groups with lawful status, including COFA migrants from the Pacific Islands. Without this financial assistance, lawfully present immigrant groups who are disproportionately impacted by hepatitis B may no longer be able to afford health coverage.