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Local physician speaks at doctor's rally at U.S. Capitol against Republican health care repeal effort

"This is not a political issue of right or left. This a human issue of right or wrong," he said.

Venice, California, June 22, 2017—A Los Angeles physician was one of six doctors to speak at today's "white coat" press conference at the U.S. Capitol protesting Republican efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

Jay W. Lee, MD, MPH, FAAFP, is chief medical officer at Venice Family Clinic, a community health center serving 25,000 patients on the Westside of Los Angeles. About 10,000 of the Clinic's patients risk losing their health insurance under the bill recently passed by the House of Representatives. A small group of Senate Republicans introduced a similar bill this morning.

"Together with America's health care professionals, I rise up to oppose the mean-spirited and cruel effort by Congressional Republicans to take away health coverage from 23 million Americans—my patients, your neighbors," Dr. Lee said. "I declare that if all people are created equal, endowed with certain inalienable rights—among these, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—we hold this truth to be self-evident: Trumpcare lacks heart and must be stopped."

More than 50 physicians attended the event, which also featured comments by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer, Congressman Ami Bera, MD, and Congressman Raul Ruiz, MD.

Dr. Lee noted that before the Affordable Care Act, some 46 million Americans could not afford health insurance and could not afford to pay for health care out-of-pocket, yet they also could not qualify for Medicaid, often being told, "You're just not sick or poor enough."

He shared the story of Kenrick Bascom, a middle-aged financial services professional who lost his health insurance in 2007 and was unable to get reinsured until he became covered by the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act. Bascom had suffered abdominal pain for years before getting his insurance card. Soon after he was covered, he scheduled an appointment with one of Venice Family Clinic's primary care specialists and quickly learned he had cancer in his left kidney. Bascom was referred to a surgeon to have the cancer removed, and today he is cancer-free.

"So let me ask you: Is this NOT the outcome we want?" Dr. Lee asked. "Why would we go back to the days of needless suffering and medical bankruptcies? Why would we want anything other than health and happiness for all Americans?"

Dr. Lee is board certified in family medicine and is an assistant clinical professor at the UC Irvine School of Medicine. He is active in physician leadership, having served as 2015-2016 President of the California Academy of Family Physicians and currently serving as a member of Family Medicine for America's Health Core Tactic Team on Practice Transformation. He also was recently named one of the ["Top 10 Primary Care Doctors to Follow on Twitter,"](#) by *Medical Economics*.



“This is not a political issue of right or left. This a human issue of right or wrong, and repealing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is morally wrong,” he said. “Health is the keystone of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and health coverage is the key that unlocks the health care system. Every human being deserves to have a copy of that key. No human deserves to die because they don’t. Don’t mess with my patients. Trust me, I’m a doctor.”

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About Venice Family Clinic:

Venice Family Clinic’s mission is to provide quality primary health care to people in need. Launched in 1970 by founder Phillip Rossman, MD, and co-founder Mayer B. Davidson, MD, the Clinic has grown from a small storefront operation into the largest community health center on the Westside of Los Angeles. With the help of more than 1,000 volunteers, including nearly 400 volunteer physicians, Venice Family Clinic is the medical home for approximately 25,000 low-income and homeless patients per year through 12 sites in Venice, Santa Monica, Mar Vista, Inglewood, and Culver City. For more information, visit www.venicefamilyclinic.org.