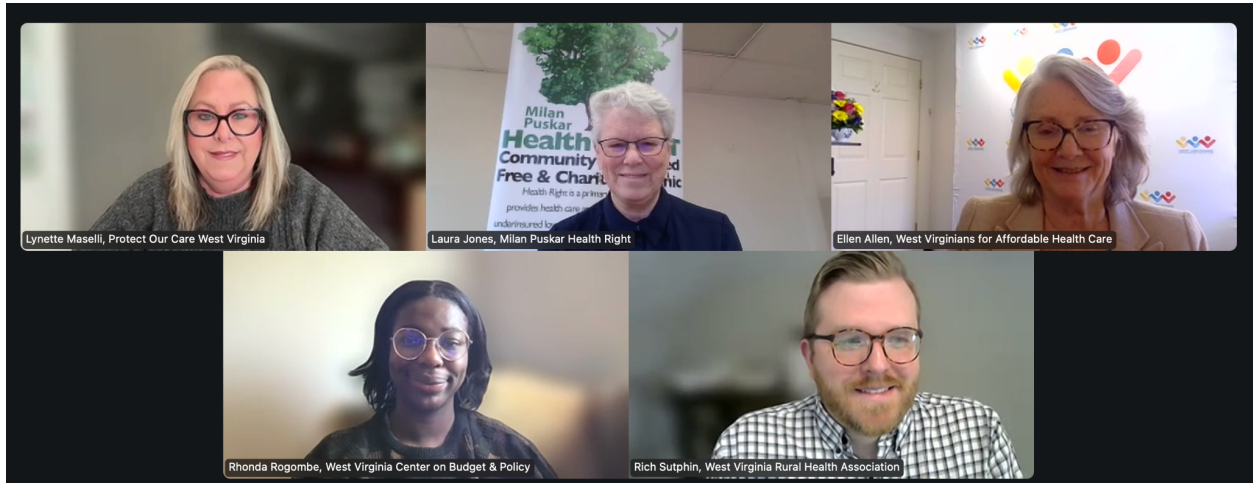


Protect Our Care WV Hosts ACA Anniversary Discussion, Impacts on WV

On the 15th Anniversary of the ACA, Republicans Seek to Hike Premiums and Take Away Health Care from Staters



Watch the full event [here](#)

(CHARLESTON, WV) – Protect Our Care WV hosted a discussion today to highlight how the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has dramatically shifted West Virginia’s healthcare landscape, and the ongoing threats to American health care as the Affordable Care Act turns 15 years old. For over a decade, millions of Americans have been able to get quality and affordable health care through the ACA, and more West Virginians than ever are covered.

“As a lifelong West Virginian and the executive director of West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, I want to set the record straight: the Affordable Care Act, its Enhanced Premium Tax Credits, Medicaid, and Medicaid expansion are not “wasteful,” they are critical,” said Ellen Allen. “Maintaining access to affordable health insurance is crucial. We can never return to the days when West Virginians were denied health insurance coverage because they exceeded a lifetime limit or were denied coverage because they had a preexisting condition.”

But Republicans remain hard at work trying to rip away access to quality, affordable health coverage. They’re pushing to take away tax credits from working families that are helping West Virginians save thousands of dollars on their health care and to cut Medicaid funding by at least [\\$880 billion](#) to give tax breaks to the ultra-wealthy and big corporations.

West Virginia Rural Health Association executive director, Rich Sutphin, says the ACA and Medicaid expansion has prevented rural hospital closures throughout the Mountain State.

“Fifteen percent of West Virginia’s hospitals are at immediate risk of closure, so if the ACA, Enhanced Premium Tax Credits and Medicaid expansion go away, those hospitals will likely close. Then, all other hospitals in the state will have to evaluate whether they can afford to continue offering high quality care and expanded services.”

“Without the ACA and Medicaid expansion, over 166,000 West Virginians will lose their health insurance and not be able to afford coverage in the private Market,” said Laura Jones, executive director at the Milan Puskar Health Right and West Virginians for Affordable Health Care Board President. “As a director of one of West Virginia’s free clinics, I’ve seen first hand how the ACA and Medicaid expansion have re-shaped West Virginia’s health care landscape.”

At the same time, Donald Trump has been making it [harder](#) for families to enroll in affordable health care coverage. He shortened open enrollment, required more paperwork from people trying to enroll, raised premiums and out-of-pocket costs, and slashed funding for enrollment assistance by 90%. Republicans are also trying to roll back protections for pre-existing conditions and ban Medicare from negotiating for lower drug prices. The bottom line is that **West Virginia** families can’t afford GOP price hikes.

“If Republicans in Congress get their way, West Virginians will see their bills skyrocket and may have to forgo coverage altogether and lose routine, preventative health care,” said Lynette Maselli, state director of Protect Our Care WV. “An estimated 64,000 West Virginians will see their premiums increase by at least \$1400, and if Republicans gut Medicaid funding, over 500,000 West Virginians’ health care will be at risk.”

Speakers called on their members of Congress to push back against Republican attacks and protect **West Virginians’** access to affordable, high quality care.

“This is a non-partisan issue,” said Rhonda Rogombe, health policy analyst at West Virginia Center on Budget & Policy. “We have a role to play in fighting back against these draconian cuts. Contacting our lawmakers is critical during these discussions. Never shut up about the things you’re angry about, and these proposed cuts are so unjust. No one stands to gain anything from people dying from losing the few resources they have.”

You can watch the full event [here](#), and learn more about Republican efforts to raise health care costs [here](#) and GOP attacks on Medicaid [here](#).

###