

The Health Care Repeal Lawsuit Ruling (*Texas v. United States*)

Talking Points: The Effect on People with Substance Use Disorders

Health Insurance: This ruling puts us on the pathway toward repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which would strip health insurance from more than 1.8 million people living with substance use disorders and mental illness and impede their access to life-saving treatment. Additional harms would include:

- Eliminating the requirement for coverage of substance use disorders and mental illness in many health insurance plans.
- Limiting availability of evidenced-based Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for addiction, which decreases the recurrence of symptoms and enables people to be more productive.
- Reversing coverage gains for young adults who are struggling with substance use disorders by eliminating their access to their parents' insurance plans through age 26.

Consumer Protections: This Health Care Repeal Lawsuit is an effort to weaken consumer protections for people with substance use disorders. Our families and neighbors cannot afford to lose the protection and security that the Affordable Care Act provides. This ruling puts us on the pathway toward repeal, which would:

- Eliminate protections for 130 million people living with pre-existing conditions, including substance use disorders. These protections enable people to obtain insurance that covers their conditions without bankrupting them.
- Weaken parity protections designed to ensure millions of people living with substance use disorders have broad insurance coverage for their illness. The ACA required more health plans to provide coverage for substance use disorders and mental illness that is comparable to that provided for other illnesses.

Harms Inflicted on Communities of Color: Research shows that the unmet need for addiction treatment is worse for African-American and Latinx populations than for white populations. This Health Care Repeal Lawsuit ruling puts us on the pathway toward repeal, which would reverse coverage gains made in communities of color through the ACA, and has the potential to worsen racial health disparities. Additional harms would include:

- Further restricting access to coverage and treatment in Black communities where opioid overdoses continue to rise.
- Limiting access to substance use prevention and early intervention services for young people of color. Interpersonal and structural racism places young people of color at higher risk of experiencing trauma and of misusing substances to cope with that trauma. This lawsuit could also jeopardize the expansion of substance use prevention services that are often financed through health insurance plans tied to the ACA. These services provide young people with the support they need to prevent substance use disorders.

Prevention and Early Intervention: This lawsuit ruling puts us on the pathway toward repeal, which would roll back financing for prevention and early intervention services that provide young people with the support they need to live healthy lives. Through the ACA, youth and their families have greater access to routine primary care and community-based services that detect early substance misuse and prevent the development of substance use disorders as youth become adults. Additional harms would include:

- Reducing services needed to address teen substance misuse, including vaping, by reversing Medicaid expansion and eliminating insurance plans that cover substance use prevention and early intervention services.
- Weakening school-based prevention strategies – such as Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment – that are funded through health insurance established or enhanced by the ACA.