

AROUND NYU LANGONE HEALTH PATIENT CARE

What the Future Holds: How Repeal of the Affordable Care Act Might Affect Vulnerable Patients at NYU Langone

by Office of Communications | 11:45 AM | Wednesday, April 19, 2017 | [Share](#) | [1 Like](#)



With uncertainty surrounding the fate of the Affordable Care Act, NYU School of Medicine's Department of Population Health hosted a panel on Wednesday, April 12, about how repeal of the landmark healthcare law would impact vulnerable populations in New York City. (Pictured left, moderator Joe Lhota.)

While acknowledging flaws in the 2010 law, the panel agreed that repeal could cause low income and other New Yorkers who benefited from the legislation's expansion of Medicaid coverage and subsidies for purchasing insurance to lose benefits, or insurance coverage altogether.

The panel was moderated by **Joseph J. Lhota**, senior vice president, vice dean, and chief of staff at NYU Langone and included **Nicole Cohen**, senior caucus policy advisor for U.S. Representative Joe Crowley, a Democrat from New York and chairman of the House Democratic Caucus; **Larry K. McReynolds**, executive director of the Family Health Centers at NYU Langone; **Kenneth E. Raske**, president of the Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA); and **Andrew B. Wallach, MD**, clinical director of Ambulatory Care and chief of General Internal Medicine at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue.



From left, panelists Joe Lhota; Nicole Cohen, advisor to U.S. Representative Joe Crowley; Larry K. McReynolds, Family Health Centers at NYU Langone; Dr. Andrew Wallach, NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue; and Kenneth E. Raske, GNYHA.

The event is part of a "Controversies in Population Health" series directed by **Mark Schwartz, MD**, professor, Departments of Population Health and Medicine, who said that the future of the ACA is an important issue for the NYU Langone community: "Many of our faculty, staff, house staff, and students are anxious about maintaining access to high quality healthcare for the populations we serve in New York City, given the health policy changes being considered in Washington."

Weighing the Consequences

Panelists said an ACA repeal with a replacement similar to the Republicans' American Health Care Act could have several impacts on low-income patients and healthcare systems:

Loss of Coverage: "The level of coverage expansion [under the ACA] has been extraordinary," said Raske, who participated in drafting the law. "Around 2.7 million New Yorkers got covered through Medicaid and health insurance. That's 2.7 million families that can sleep well at night."

Millions of kids on Medicaid nationwide could lose insurance if there were cuts, which affects their health and, by extension, school attendance and general well-being, said McReynolds. The Family Health Centers at NYU Langone

include 22 clinics based in public schools, which provide primary care to students in underserved areas.

Focus on Prevention and Outpatient Care Could Lose Steam: Loss of insurance coverage can affect how early patients seek care. NYC Health+Hospitals has seen a six percent drop in visits to its emergency department at the same time its percentage of uninsured adults declined from 34 to 30 percent, according to Dr. Wallach. “More and more people are coming in early. We’re able to shift our focus to preventative care, taking care of patients, keeping them healthy, keeping them out of the hospital,” he said.

But this shift to preventive care could lapse, panelists said, if ACA repeal led to less funding and fewer incentives for healthcare systems to focus on preventive, primary care based in communities.

Having insurance coverage and free preventive coverage has meant a “cultural shift” for many patients said McReynolds. “A lot of people thought, ‘Well, I don’t need to go to the doctor because I’m not sick.’ It took a long time to teach people that you go to the doctor when you’re well.”

Budgetary Shortfalls: If the Medicaid expansion was cut back, as it would have been if the Republican American Health Care Act passed, “We would face worsening budget deficits while at the same time having to provide care for a larger cohort of patients,” said Dr. Wallach. A large volume of safety net hospitals’ patients come from Medicaid, the program created in 1965 for low-income Americans who can’t afford healthcare. Repeal would also pose significant financial problems for the healthcare systems that serve these patients, said panelists.



Panelists Nicole Cohen and Larry McReynolds. The panel shared insights as to how repeal of the ACA would affect NYU Langone's low-income patients.

Is Healthcare a Right?

Lhota began the panel by revisiting the history of healthcare reform in the U.S., which only began at the federal level in the early 20th century. Battles over healthcare, from the Truman to the Nixon to the Clinton administrations, have centered on whether or not healthcare is a right.

President Barack Obama believed the answer was yes, but he decided to let Congress do the job of drafting the bill that is now associated with his name—Obamacare.

“What people don’t realize is there is no single thing called Obamacare,” said Cohen. “It’s not like Medicare where there’s one single program or policy for everyone. If anything, Obamacare is the concept of having insurance.”

“I look at the ACA as being both aspirational, and, as President Obama said, it is not a perfect law, it is an imperfect law,” said Lhota.

The Future of the ACA

If the ACA is repealed, some of the changes brought on by the law will continue, such as the move to electronic health records, and investment in ambulatory care, speakers said.

For doctors and medical students who want to advocate a position on the ACA’s future, Cohen urged them to contact their representatives: “Policymakers really do appreciate hearing the lived experiences of patients and of providers.”

Comments (2)

This is such an important issue. Really glad NYU is addressing this.



Kristina Jones April 26 12:01 PM



Is there a recording of this panel available to listen to?

Jason Randazza April 28 2:24 PM

Add a comment

Post

DIRECTORIES

- Search
- People Search
- Applications
- Departments
- Find a Doctor
- Find a Researcher
- Clinical On-Call

TOOLS

- Webmail
- Events Calendar
- Shuttle Information
- Shuttle Live Map
- Employee Parking Maps
- NYU Langone Health
- NYU Langone Hospital - Brooklyn
- New York University

SERVICES

- Human Resources
- Meeting Room Reservations
- MCIT: Support & Services
- MCIT: Support & Services - Ticket
- History
- RED&F: Support & Services
- Requests
- Help Center

COLLABORATION

- My Profile
- My Newsfeed
- Submit Feedback
- Communities