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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer Given to the People's Hearing on Health Care On the Impacts of the American Health Care Act on New Yorkers

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My name is Gale Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President. I'd like to thank Public Advocate Tish James for holding this hearing on this incredibly important topic: protecting the millions of New Yorkers who stand to lose their health care if Republicans succeed in repealing the Affordable Care Act.

Though facts and statistics seem to matter less in today's hyper-partisan political climate, I'm still a believer in their value. So let's quickly take stock of what we know is true if Republicans succeed this week in gutting Obamacare with passage of the grossly misnamed American Health Care Act through the Senate.

Obamacare has provided insurance for millions of New Yorkers who previously lacked it: Since the program's inception, more than 3.4 million people have enrolled in New York's ACA program—that's a full 17.2% of New York State residents. Moreover, 1.6 million of these enrollees—or 47%—reside in the New York City area. Many of these enrollees, fearing the political turmoil surrounding the law, signed up just in the last few months—Over a 3 day period in December 2016 alone, 55,000 people signed up for coverage.

Obamacare is providing health insurance to those who need it most: All but 7% of enrollees in New York State's ACA program are low-income, and have enrolled through Medicaid or another subsidized program. The American Health Care Act contains deep cuts to Medicaid, which will force states to either find ways to make up for that difference, or cut back on the medical coverage provided. This will harm the most vulnerable among us, including poor pregnant women and people with disabilities.

Low-income New Yorkers will be badly hurt by the repeal of Obamacare: This is what we know will happen if Republicans succeed in repealing the health care law:

- An estimated 2.7 million New Yorkers will lose their health insurance;
- The state will take a budget hit of roughly \$3.7 billion;
- Counties in New York could lose up to \$600 million of federal Medicaid funding, with New York City set to lose the most—more than \$433 million.

- Hospital groups around the state warn they will incur billions of dollars in losses if they are once again responsible for providing care for millions of uninsured patients.

Jobs would be at risk: Wages, benefits, and jobs for nurses and healthcare workers would be at risk if the repeal is successful and Medicaid funding for homecare programs are slashed.

Women will be badly hurt with the repeal of Obamacare: Many preventive services that benefit women were not previously covered before Obamacare. Or, if they were covered, the services often had high co-pays or deductibles. We should take comfort in the fact that—for now, at least—women will continue to have access to a wide range of necessary preventative services, such as mammograms and breastfeeding support, which are covered thanks to Obamacare.

Who stands to gain if Obamacare is repealed? You guessed it—the very rich: If Obamacare is successfully repealed, the Tax Policy Center estimates the top .1% of households—those with incomes of \$3.7 million or more—will receive a tax cut of roughly \$197,000 in 2017. This, we know, is ultimately the Republican’s aim: to provide tax cuts to the most affluent among us.

We must do all we can to fight back against this horrific piece of legislation, so I’d like to thank you, Public Advocate James, once again for helping draw attention to this issue since Congress refuses to provide for hearings. I’d also like to take the opportunity to assure New Yorkers that your elected officials will continue standing up for what’s right. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.