STATEMENT ON THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT LEGISLATION

APTA PRESIDENT SHARON L. DUNN, PT, PhD

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The American Physical Therapy Association has long advocated for access to adequate, affordable, and quality health care services for all Americans.

Emerging reports from Capitol Hill in the last 24 hours indicate that the American Health Care Act (AHCA) legislation, which the House of Representatives plans to vote on today, would challenge those principles.

In recent weeks, APTA joined with the American Occupational Therapy Association and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association to underline the importance of protecting habilitation and rehabilitation as essential health benefits. The latest reports suggest that additional legislative changes could be made to the bill that would result in cuts to essential health benefits that are even more severe than initially outlined.

APTA also recently has voiced support for Medicaid policies that ensure this country’s most vulnerable Americans get the health services they need. As proposed, the AHCA would threaten that coverage and care.

In light of these concerns, today APTA issued an action alert to pivotal House members urging “no” votes on this bill should the House move forward with amendments that would eliminate essential health benefits. Should it pass, APTA will reiterate these principles to Senate offices next week when hundreds of physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy come to Washington, DC, for APTA’s Federal Advocacy Forum.

APTA is not opposed to reform of the Affordable Care Act, provided that any health care system reform aligns with our policy principles. The rapidly evolving AHCA legislation appears to be heading in a direction that would create unneeded barriers to care and reduce the access to care for millions of Americans.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Dunn, PT, PhD
President, American Physical Therapy Association