



## The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

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7/27/2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
S-230 United States Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
S-221, United States Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Members of the United States Senate:

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons, I write to urge members of the Senate to prioritize ensuring patient access to high quality health care when considering plans to reform health care. It is of the utmost importance that our patients, and all Americans, have access to life-saving health care services including, but not limited to, hospital services (including cardiothoracic surgery) and evidence-based screening protocols. Proposals that limit patients' access to evidence-based, comprehensive health care coverage will have dire consequences on patient care and patient outcomes, if passed by Congress.

Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,200 surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lung, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest. The mission of the Society is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

We urge Senators to work through regular order in an open, bipartisan manner to advance reforms that align with STS's Health Reform Priorities which include:

- Ensuring patients' access to health care coverage that will provide for evidence-based, value-driven, life-saving care.
- Providing for the secure transfer of clinical, quality, and cost data so that health care providers can analyze their performance, modify their practices, and provide the best possible patient care.
- Promoting value and transparency in the health care system.
- Prioritizing expanding the physician workforce to meet the country's needs, the adoption of new technology, and continuous learning for practicing physicians.
- Promoting access to team-based, coordinated health care.

Analyses from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) have shown that the health reform approaches being contemplated in the Senate would deprive many Americans of access to evidence-based, value-driven, life-saving care. According to the CBO, all of the proposals currently under consideration would result in the loss of insurance coverage for millions of Americans, limiting access to care for those who need it most.

Regrettably, because of the concerns articulated above, we cannot support the current health reform efforts in Congress and will oppose passage of any legislation that does not address our concerns. The Society looks forward to working with

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Leaders McConnell, Schumer, members of the U.S. Senate

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Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate to address the problems created by the ACA while protecting essential health benefits and ensuring access to health care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard L. Prager". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard L Prager, MD  
President