

CONTACT:

Allison Miller, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, 202-585-3241, [Allison.Miller@cancer.org](mailto:Allison.Miller@cancer.org)

Michelle Kirkwood, American Diabetes Association, 703-299-2053, [Mkirkwood@diabetes.org](mailto:Mkirkwood@diabetes.org)

Retha Sherrod, American Heart Association, 202-785-7929, [Retha.Serrod@heart.org](mailto:Retha.Serrod@heart.org)

Allison MacMunn, American Lung Association, 312-801-7628, [media@Lung.org](mailto:media@Lung.org)

Eileen Curran, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 617-719-3202, [Eileen.Curran@nmss.org](mailto:Eileen.Curran@nmss.org)

## **Patient Groups: Uphold Health Care Law As Congress Intended**

### *Patient Groups Warn of Potential for Dire Consequences in Latest Affordable Care Act Case*

Washington, D.C., June 14, 2018—Patient groups representing millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions filed an *amicus curiae* or friend of the court brief today in the U.S. District Court case, *Texas v. United States*, citing the devastating impact patients would face should the court side with plaintiffs and move to invalidate the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The groups, which include the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Diabetes Association, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, argue the law was intended to help patients and Congress's refusal to repeal the law without a replacement reinforces that intent.

Twenty states led by the Texas Attorney General (AG) filed a lawsuit challenging the health care law known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in federal court in Texas. The plaintiffs in *Texas vs. U.S.A* argue that because Congress repealed the individual mandate's tax penalty as part of tax reform legislation, the entire law is invalid and must now be struck down.

Following is the groups' joint statement:

"The critical patient protections in the health care law provide an essential lifeline for millions of Americans who suffer serious illnesses, like cancer, lung and heart disease, diabetes, neurological and chronic respiratory conditions. Their ability to access affordable, meaningful health insurance is critical to their health and wellbeing.

"Prior to the health care law, people who needed health insurance the most—older and sicker Americans—found it difficult or impossible to obtain affordable coverage. Denial for pre-existing conditions, outrageous premiums and inadequate benefit packages were often the only available options. Without access to comprehensive health coverage they could afford, patients were often forced to delay or forego necessary health care.

"Before the ACA more than half of heart patients reported difficulty paying for their care and of those patients more than 40 percent said they had delayed care or had not filled prescriptions. Uninsured patients with diabetes were six times as likely to forgo necessary medical care than those with coverage. Uninsured patients were less likely to be screened for cancer and more likely to be diagnosed with later stage disease which is harder to survive and more costly to treat.

“Since the law went into effect, uninsured rates have decreased more than six percent nationwide. This has improved patients’ ability to prevent, detect and treat their disease. Because of the ACA, there is already a small but statistically significant shift toward early-stage diagnosis for colorectal, lung, breast and pancreatic cancer in states that have increased access to health care through Medicaid because of the law.

“The health care law, including the individual mandate, Medicaid expansion, tax credits and patient protections essential to chronically ill patients, was intended to increase the number of Americans with health care coverage. Congress’s refusal to repeal the law without an acceptable replacement confirms Congress’s intent. The courts should respect the will of Congress. Tossing out the law would clearly ignore the will of Congress at the expense of 27 million Americans losing their health care by 2020, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

“We urge the court to uphold the law and recognize Congress’s clear intent to improve access to life-saving health care for millions of Americans.”

#### **About ACS CAN**

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit [www.acscan.org](http://www.acscan.org).

#### **About the American Diabetes Association**

Nearly half of American adults have diabetes or prediabetes; more than 30 million adults and children have diabetes; and every 21 seconds, another individual is diagnosed with diabetes in the U.S. Founded in 1940, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) is the nation’s leading voluntary health organization whose mission is to prevent and cure diabetes, and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. The ADA drives discovery by funding research to treat, manage and prevent all types of diabetes, as well as to search for cures; raises voice to the urgency of the diabetes epidemic; and works to safeguard policies and programs that protect people with diabetes. In addition, the ADA supports people living with diabetes, those at risk of developing diabetes, and the health care professionals who serve them through information and programs that can improve health outcomes and quality of life. For more information, please call the ADA at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) or visit [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org). Information from both of these sources is available in English and Spanish. Find us on Facebook (American Diabetes Association), Twitter (@AmDiabetesAssn) and Instagram (@AmDiabetesAssn)

#### **About the American Heart Association**

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – the two leading causes of death in the world. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or to get involved,

call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit [heart.org](http://heart.org) or call any of our offices around the country. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

#### **About the American Lung Association**

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases. For more information about the American Lung Association, a holder of the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Guide Seal, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: [Lung.org](http://Lung.org).

#### **About the National Multiple Sclerosis Society**

The Society mobilizes people and resources so that everyone affected by multiple sclerosis can live their best lives as we stop MS in its tracks, restore what has been lost and end MS forever. Last year alone, through our comprehensive nationwide network of services, the Society devoted more than \$100 million to connect approximately one million people affected by MS to the connections, information and resources they need and invested \$42 million to support more than 380 new and ongoing research projects around the world. We are united in our collective power to do something about MS now and end this disease forever. For more information about multiple sclerosis and the National MS Society go to [nationalMSSociety.org](http://nationalMSSociety.org) or call 800-344-4867.