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The Honorable Peter T. King
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The Honorable Thomas R. Suozzi
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The Honorable Kathleen M. Rice
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The Honorable Gregory W. Meeks
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The Honorable Grace Meng
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The Honorable Nydia M. Velázquez
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The Honorable Hakeem S. Jeffries
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The Honorable Yvette D. Clarke
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The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
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The Honorable Daniel M. Donovan Jr.
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The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
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The Honorable Joseph Crowley
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The Honorable Eliot L. Engel
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The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
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The Honorable Sean Patrick Maloney
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The Honorable John J. Faso
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The Honorable Paul Tonko
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The Honorable Elise M. Stefanik
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The Honorable Claudia Tenney
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The Honorable Tom Reed
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The Honorable John Katko
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The Honorable Louise M. Slaughter
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The Honorable Brian Higgins
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The Honorable Chris Collins
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Washington, DC 20515-3227

December 6, 2017

Dear Representatives,

We, the undersigned organizations, representing over 23,000 physicians and medical students in New York, share a dedication to improving the health and economic security of all New Yorkers.

We are writing to ask you to work to prevent various severe health care cuts that may result from the Senate's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed on December 2nd, as well as the result of inaction in preserving certain health care programs that are essential to health care delivery in New York State.

First, the legislation could trigger sequestration cuts to the Medicare program that would significantly impact health care to our elderly. Moreover, we are very concerned that Congress has yet to pass legislation to assure continuing funding for New York's Essential Plan, which provides needed low cost health insurance coverage for working families. Furthermore, Congress has yet to pass legislation to continue funding for the State Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage for our children. At the same time, the tax bill would further harm working families by stripping away their ability to make deductions of medical expenses.¹

¹ <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/tax-bill-2017>

We are extremely concerned that Congress has failed to take action to date to preserve needed funding for CHIP, Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and Disproportionate Share Hospitals (DSH), given their immense importance to New York and across the country. CHIP provides health care for over 300,000 children in New York. There are over 600 FQHCs in the state, providing care for over 200,000 people. DSH funding provides a lifeline to numerous safety net hospitals across the state. These three programs alone comprise a large portion of New York's health care safety net.

Adding \$1.7 billion in cuts to Medicare² to this rapidly growing health care funding crisis would surely decimate the state's health care system. The uncertain future of cost-sharing reductions, not addressed in this bill, would sink New York's Essential Plan, taking \$1 billion and the insurance of over 600,000 New Yorkers.³ Reauthorizing other programs at the expense of Medicaid or other vital public health programs, like the Prevention and Public Health Fund, simply moves the pain around. All of this in order to give a tax gift to those who are most likely to hold onto the money rather than spend or invest it.

To make up for this loss of funding, New York State would have to contribute much more of its own funding or make deep cuts to eligibility, benefits, and provider payments, with those cuts likely growing more severe over time. Many New Yorkers would surely lose health insurance coverage under such a scenario, likely over 1 million, with hundreds of thousands of these people living in your Congressional districts. New Yorkers would also lose over \$1 billion in medical expense deductions.² Even with strong economic growth, average New Yorkers would suffer under this tax plan, with health care costs outpacing modest wage gains.⁴

Cutting health care funding would also have a negative impact on New York's economy. Rural and safety net hospitals, in particular, could be financially devastated by loss of reimbursement for care they provide. The Commonwealth Fund had estimated that New York State would lose 131,000 jobs under previous *Affordable Care Act (ACA)* repeal proposals, about 42,000 of which would come from your districts.⁵ There is good reason to believe that economic damage would be even worse under the recently passed Senate bill.

Devastating our health care system in this way would do no good at all. New York has a record of successful partnerships with the federal government to improve access, reduce costs, improve quality, and save money. The state's current Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program is a testament to how much money can be saved through thoughtful and well-designed reforms, rather than blunt and ill-designed cuts at the federal level. We would hope that New York State's innovations could be incorporated into thoughtful, bipartisan efforts to improve the ACA.

As physicians, we took an oath to put the health of our patients first. **Simply put, Congress must act to prevent the loss of needed health insurance coverage for millions here in New York and across the country.** Trust that we will be paying close attention to the decisions of our members of Congress, and speaking out to protect our patients and communities. We thank those of you who stood with constituents and voted against the budget resolution and ACA repeal efforts earlier this year. We are also aware that some of you voted for repeal and the 2018 House budget resolution, and we urge that you reconsider these actions so as to preserve the safety net that so many of your constituents depend upon. We therefore request that you vote against any plan that results in significant cuts to health care funding, which would threaten the lives of our patients, and severely damage our communities and the state of New York.

² <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Scary-Tax-Plan.pdf>

³ <https://www.empirecenter.org/publications/nys-essential-plan-remains-in-jeopardy/>

⁴ <https://taxfoundation.org/senate-tax-cuts-and-jobs-act-state-impact/>

⁵ <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2017/jan/repealing-federal-health-reform>

Sincerely,

Eve Kellner, DO
National President, Committee of Interns and Residents / SEIU Healthcare

Vanessa Clifford
Director of Community Advocacy, Doctors Council SEIU

Nina Agrawal, MD
Doctors for America - New York State

Charles Rothberg, MD
President, Medical Society of the State of New York

Camille A. Clare, MD, MPH
President, Manhattan Central Medical Society, local affiliate of National Medical Association (NMA)
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Marc Manseau, MD
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Kamini Doobay, MD
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Anna Costakis, MD
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Cappy Collins, MD, MPH
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Progressive Doctors

The above organizations are collaborating together as @NYDocs