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On behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose over 900 congregations across North America encompass 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which represents over 2,000 Reform rabbis, we submit these questions regarding the nomination of Rep. Tom Price as Secretary of Health and Human Services. We urge Committee Members to make use of them during his nomination hearing.

The Reform Movement is the largest denomination in American Jewish life and strongly advocates for equal access to affordable, comprehensive healthcare for all people. Jewish tradition teaches us of the necessity of providing healthcare to all of God's children. Providing healthcare is not just an obligation for the patient and the doctor, but for the society as well. It is for this reason that healthcare is listed first by the medieval philosopher and physician Maimonides on his list of the ten most important communal services that had to be offered by a city to its residents (Mishneh Torah, Sefer Hamadda IV:23). During the long history of the self-governing Jewish community, almost all such communities set up societies to ensure that all their citizens had access to health care. Doctors were required to reduce their rates for poor patients and, where that was not sufficient, communal subsidies were established (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 249:16; Responsa Ramat Rahel of Rabbi Eliezer Waldernberg sections 24-25).

We strongly advocated for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act when it was being considered in Congress. The ACA was designed to respond to the moral and health care crisis reflected by the fact that, at the time, 47 million Americans were uninsured, leaving them without access to decent medical care. The ACA's impact is profound: more than 20 million Americans have gained coverage under the ACA.<sup>1</sup> Knowing that the lack of access to affordable healthcare can devastate lives and impose intolerable pain, chaos and indignity, we oppose repeal of the ACA. We believe that the United States must do all its in power to ensure that all Americans can equally access affordable, comprehensive care with dignity and respect.

#### *Access to Comprehensive and Affordable Care*

1. Jewish tradition teaches the importance of a robust health care system to support care for all members of society, especially the most vulnerable. What are the core principles that you believe the American health care system must reflect?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2016/03/03/20-million-people-have-gained-health-insurance-coverage-because-affordable-care-act-new-estimates>

2. The Affordable Care Act has led to millions more Americans having access to affordable healthcare insurance. While imperfect, the law has meant enormous differences in the lives of people with preexisting conditions, people under age 26, and people who could previously not afford healthcare insurance. How do you plan to oversee the healthcare system to ensure that available insurance plans remain comprehensive and affordable?
3. If the key elements of the ACA are repealed without an adequate replacement, while consumer protections such as requiring insurance providers to cover those with preexisting conditions remain, it is highly likely that healthy individuals will exit the insurance marketplaces.<sup>2</sup> This would cause premiums to skyrocket for the remaining individuals seeking healthcare insurance, who would be the people most in need of health coverage.<sup>3</sup> What measures would you implement to ensure that insurance costs in the private marketplace do not increase under this scenario?

### *Medicaid and Medicare*

4. Under the Affordable Care Act, over ten million more Americans have gained coverage to Medicaid.<sup>4</sup> If the Medicaid expansion portion of the ACA is repealed, how would you work to protect these newly-insured Americans under Medicaid?
5. Jewish tradition teaches that treatment of the elderly is a test by which to judge the moral character of a society. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man" (Leviticus 19:32) is a commandment with renewed significance. In a time of rapidly increasing longevity and rising medical costs, our society cannot ignore the plight of millions of elderly citizens who cannot meet the expenses of serious or protracted illness. With thousands of Americans becoming eligible for Medicare every day, how do you plan to ensure that elderly Americans can continue to fully access all Medicare services, which their taxes have been supporting for decades, and that they have come to rely on?<sup>5</sup>
6. Acknowledging that not all healthcare needs are short-term or require annual visits or check-ups, how would you address ensuring Medicaid coverage for long-term care and illness?
7. What are your plans to address coverage for assisted living, which is increasingly becoming an option for seniors, many of whom are and will continue to diminish their

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.urban.org/research/publication/implications-partial-repeal-aca-through-reconciliation>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.urban.org/research/publication/implications-partial-repeal-aca-through-reconciliation>

<sup>4</sup> <http://kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-effects-of-medicaid-expansion-under-the-aca-findings-from-a-literature-review/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Medicare2030\\_Chartbook.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Medicare2030_Chartbook.pdf)

savings to cover this cost?<sup>6</sup>

8. If Medicaid were to be funded through block grants and per capita caps as some have proposed, how would you ensure continuous access over time and geography to necessary health coverage? How would you account for future changes in cost? How would you address proposals to create work requirements for Medicaid? In what ways will you ensure that the funds to states are used primarily on care rather than on administrative and other costs?

#### *Equality in the Health Care System*

9. The ACA ensured that an array of preventive health measures would be covered without co-payments.<sup>7</sup> This provision includes core aspects of women's health, including contraceptive coverage. Under the Obama administration, a compromise was established to both ensure the coverage of central women's health needs and the religious freedom of certain employers who may have objections to covering contraception. How would the Department of Health and Human Services under your direction continue to manage and implement this provision?
10. A core tenet of Reform Judaism is the fundamental equality of all people. The ACA sought to address gender-based disparities in costs of and access to healthcare. How would you direct federally-administered health care plans to ensure that women do not have to face higher health costs for simply being female?

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/americas-looming-long-term-care-crisis-and-what-can-be-done/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://kff.org/health-reform/fact-sheet/preventive-services-covered-by-private-health-plans/>