

Opinion: GOP health care plan could hurt Tahoe

By Clint Purvance

Recently, the House of Representatives narrowly passed the American Health Care Act (H.R. 1628). The bill now resides in the Senate for determination and possible modification. Though we do not know if the senators will pass the American Health Care Act, Barton Health is committed to providing consistently exceptional care for our Lake Tahoe community members and visitors.



Clint Purvance

Many of our residents rely on health care coverage from the expansion of the Affordable Care Act. Since the passage of healthcare reform, the number of residents covered by Medi-Cal has doubled. Currently, 9,500 South Tahoe residents receive Medi-Cal benefits and the area's uninsured population has reduced from 26.2 percent in the 2012 Community Health Needs Assessment to 14.7 percent in the 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment.

If the American Health Care Act passes and is enacted in the Senate without changes, the American Hospital Association estimates that \$880 billion will be cut from Medicaid programs nationwide. This will affect more than 14 million Californians – many children, senior citizens, and low-income families – who rely on Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid, for health care

services.

It is Barton Health's commitment, in conjunction with the California Hospital Association, the American Hospital Association, and many other health care providers, to ensure health care coverage for as many individuals and families as possible.

Though changes and revisions are expected, it is important for all of us to keep a watchful eye on this bill. The American Health Care Act puts less financial strain on the federal government, while adding more pressure on states, local jurisdictions, health care organizations, and the patients and communities we serve.

Barton Health is determined to provide programs and services for all our patients. We will continue to work closely with the California Hospital Association and American Hospital Association to find a bipartisan solution that keeps as many residents insured as possible in order to support the overall health and well-being of our community.

Clint Purvance is the CEO and president of Barton Health in South Lake Tahoe.