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SUPPORT MEDICARE FOR ALL, SINGLE PAYER

WHEREAS: Neither the repeal attempt nor the Affordable Care Act (ACA, also known as Obamacare) itself establishes guaranteed healthcare as a human right; and

WHEREAS: Apologists for the healthcare status quo assert it is too hard to eliminate the dominant role health insurance companies play, despite billions in tax subsidies they receive, and increasing premiums and out-of-pocket costs; and

WHEREAS:: The insurance coverage expansions under the ACA, primarily through the expansion of Medicaid in states that have agreed to do so, have saved lives, with up to 18 million people newly covered, but 28 million people are still without health insurance; and

WHEREAS: The inability to pay medical bills continues to be the leading cause of personal bankruptcy though it is our belief that people should never face bankruptcy as a result of needing medical care; and

WHEREAS: Due to the still largely unregulated high cost of medical care, more than a third of all U.S. adults under the age of 65 forego needed medical care, including choosing not to see a doctor, obtaining the recommended medical treatment, or failing to fill a prescription, according to a November 2015 Commonwealth Fund survey; and

WHEREAS: Our taxes pay for healthcare when we turn 65 and the vast majority of Americans believe Medicare works and should be improved and expanded, not cut or privatized; and

WHEREAS: Healthcare should not be based on a person's ability to pay for it, and that obtaining only the healthcare you can afford leaves tens of millions uninsured, and tens of millions more underinsured with high deductibles; leaves the wealthy with access to better care; leaves poor people at the mercy of underfunded Medicaid; leaves workers dependent on their employers; and leaves everyone, including employers, at the mercy of insurance companies and hospitals; and

WHEREAS: There is an ongoing patient care crisis: patients who forego medical treatment or diagnostic tests they've been prescribed or having to choose between paying a medical bill and not paying for housing, food, or other basic needs at the risk of facing financial ruin; and

WHEREAS:: Employer-provided health benefits are declining, and undermined by increasing cost shifting to workers, and healthcare takeaways are the biggest concern for union members in bargaining; and

WHEREAS: The ACA mandate to buy private insurance represents a big windfall for insurers, without any limit on the rates they can charge individuals and businesses; and

WHEREAS: Every other country in the world, where U.S. corporations build factories and sell services, who are U.S. allies in foreign affairs, and who are U.S. trading partners, use taxes to pay for a national universal healthcare which leaves U.S.-based companies at a "competitive disadvantage;" and

WHEREAS: There are dramatically lowered costs for medical procedures and devices in countries with tax-funded national or single-payer health systems; and

WHEREAS: According to the recently published report by a Koch Brothers funded think-tank, Mercatus, a Medicare for All system, would actually save Americans \$2 trillion in current health care spending over ten years.

WHEREAS: The U.S. ranks first in cost but 35th among countries of the world in health system outcomes and quality, according to the Lancet, and worse for infant mortality and life expectancy, with no relationship between what healthcare costs in the U.S. and the quality of care or access to care; and

WHEREAS: A tax-funded, single-payer national healthcare system would eliminate insurance premiums, deductibles and co-pays, and denials of medical treatment based on fabricated pretexts solely because insurance companies do not want to pay for needed medical care and because insurance companies make their huge profits by collecting premiums and denying the provision of care; and

WHEREAS: A tax-funded, single-payer national healthcare system would further control skyrocketing healthcare costs through the bulk power of the government to negotiate prices for prescription drugs, implants, other medical devices and services, including specialists, and to establish global budgets for hospitals and

dramatically lower prices and costs, as all other countries with national systems do; and

WHEREAS: A single-payer national healthcare system would guarantee a single standard of safe, therapeutic care for all regardless of ability to pay, and make clinical judgment of nurses and doctors the basis of healthcare decisions; and

WHEREAS:: A single-payer national healthcare system would provide comprehensive healthcare benefits, and guarantee patients complete choice of providers by eliminating restrictive insurance networks.

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED: The Ohio AFL-CIO shall organize to eliminate the insurance companies' immense role in healthcare, and the human suffering they cause, including relieving patients of all insurance company premiums, deductibles, and co-pays; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED: That the Ohio AFL-CIO is committed to winning both state-based single-payer, legislation, such as S.B. 91, in Ohio, and in other states, and national legislation, such as S. 1804 and H.R. 676, through the mobilization of members and a broad campaign based in the labor movement and grassroots support in local communities.

Submitted by: National Nurses United