June 26, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

We are at a critical moment. The proposed replacement for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that passed the House of Representatives earlier this year is now before the Senate with key changes that will amplify the negative impact to New York State and many communities, particularly those most economically challenged. If passed, this legislation will undo the success of the ACA in dramatically increasing the number of Americans without basic affordable health insurance. This moment will affect us as Montefiore, as caregivers, as human beings and as Americans. With no public hearings or opportunity for public education or discourse, I find the closed process of crafting these significant changes surprising and disturbing.

It is estimated that the bill that passed the House would leave more than 23 million people uninsured in 10 years—14 million next year alone—and cut $834 billion from the Medicaid program. Far from being just about the ACA, the bill unwinds decades of Medicaid services. Without exaggeration, it leaves children, women, those in poverty, the elderly, disabled, people with preexisting conditions and mentally ill people without the ability to receive the care they need. Furthermore, it doesn’t seem to repair the health insurance exchanges that are the access point for the middle class to get the best health insurance coverage. What is more alarming to me is that these sweeping changes—hastily drafted—fundamentally are a means to bring more money to the nation’s most wealthy. It is a complicated bill to be sure. But it undoubtedly redirects funds used to support access to basic healthcare and uses it for tax breaks for the wealthy. This would provide a gateway to more tax breaks to the few.

Since its founding, Montefiore’s success has been driven by a passionate commitment to our values—serving our patients with a single standard of excellence for all, regardless of who you are or your ability to pay. Our model of care that we have evolved is without doubt a model for the nation. We take comprehensive responsibility for the wellness of all the communities within which we are honored to provide care. The ACA provided opportunities for health providers like us to hone and refine more innovative care that both improved the state of well-being of our patients as well as managed the costs. We will continue to be laser focused on advancing the extraordinary work we have done—never retreating from it.

Whatever the outcome of the legislation, Montefiore will continue to stay true to its values and our commitments to our communities. I know we will prevail. I encourage all who share my passion to speak up—in your houses of worship, with your neighbors, on social media, in public forums and especially with your elected officials. Share your beliefs—whatever they are—on the best way to ensure that all Americans can afford comprehensive care so fundamental to a healthy society and a vibrant democracy. You can also visit www.AHCAToolkit.com to find several quick and easy ways to make your voice heard and comment on the bill that is before the Senate. Thank you for all you do to support Montefiore’s mission and values and for your dedication to providing the best healthcare for all.

Sincerely,

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President and CEO

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