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## **Gov. Wolf: We Must Protect the ACA and the More than 1 Million Pennsylvanians Who Will Suffer If It is Destroyed**

**York, PA** – Governor Tom Wolf today amplified his call to protect the ACA and provide health care for all amid threats as the US Senate Judiciary Committee hearings to confirm conservative Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court begin next week and the pandemic ramps up across the country.

“I’ve been talking about health care since I took office. And now, in the middle of a pandemic, it’s more important than ever,” Gov. Wolf said. “That’s why I’ve been out in the commonwealth over the past week or so talking about how health care affects Pennsylvanians, and what we are doing to make sure that every person in the commonwealth has access to the medical care they need during this pandemic and for years to come.”

Since taking office, Gov. Wolf has expanded Medicaid so that more than 700,000 Pennsylvanians now have access to high-quality health care; fought to protect women’s reproductive rights by vetoing legislation that would infringe on those rights; spoken out against the ruling that struck down the ACA’s individual mandate; signed legislation to create a state-based health insurance exchange that will provide coverage in 2021; asked Congress time and time again to protect the ACA for all Pennsylvanians; and last week announced a health care reform package to lower costs, reduce inequity, improve transparency, and ensure quality care for all Pennsylvanians.

Representative Carol Hill-Evans joined Gov. Wolf at the event, vowing to protect the ACA for her constituents.

“I am pleased to stand with the Governor in York to ensure you I will do everything in my power to protect the Affordable Care Act for the 95th legislative district, keep my constituents insured, and create a fairer healthcare system for all,” Rep. Hill-Evans said.

The event was held at Hannah Penn K-8 School in downtown York, part of the School District of the City of York. Superintendent Dr. Andrea Berry welcomed guests and discussed the benefits of having the Hannah Penn School-Based Health Center, a Family First Health clinic, housed in the

school. The clinic – the only one of its kind in a school setting in the area – provides health care to many students and community members.

“The physical location of the Hannah Penn School-Based Health Center within the Hannah Penn School demonstrates the potential of the Family First Health and School District of the City of York partnership to create neighborhood change,” Dr. Berry said. “In the coming year, we will take the next step on this journey to deepen our impact in the school and neighborhood and, through our collective connections, will work to drive systemic health outcomes for community residents.”

Maureen Casey, a registered nurse, and constituent Stacie Ritter also joined the governor. Each guest spoke about their experience with the ACA and why it is imperative it is not dismantled.

"Before the ACA, emergency rooms were overrun with people who had no choice but to use it as their primary care physician," Casey said. "Nurses were treating patients with conditions that could have been managed, if only they could afford it. Sometimes it was too late. None of us want to return to those days, especially now that we face a pandemic, flu season on the horizon, and an economic recession that has families struggling just for the basics."

Stacie Ritter is a mother of twins, now 22, who were diagnosed with leukemia when they were 4 years old.

“Here we are 10 years later still fighting to keep these ACA protections in place, but now in the midst of a global pandemic,” Ritter said. “We are fighting once again – with more than 200,000 dead – to protect our most vulnerable citizens from being discriminated against.”

Gov. Wolf stressed that during a pandemic when our nation is facing a highly contagious, airborne virus that spreads rapidly when people gather together, it is extremely concerning that every Pennsylvanian doesn't have access to health care coverage, especially the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians, including those with pre-existing conditions who are most at risk of contracting COVID-19.

“Right now, we need to be expanding access to coverage, in order to protect all Pennsylvanians; instead, the ACA is under attack at the federal level,” Gov. Wolf said.

A case brought by Republican state Attorneys General will be argued before the Supreme Court in November that calls for the Affordable Care Act to be rendered unconstitutional based on a change to the ACA passed by the Republican-led Congress in 2017.

“This is an unconscionable attack on access to affordable health care for millions of Americans, including one in ten Pennsylvanians under the age of 65, and it is particularly abhorrent in the midst of a public health crisis that is still unfolding,” Gov. Wolf said.

Gov. Wolf also called on Congress to join in the fight to protect the ACA, especially as President Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court has criticized both the ACA and legal rulings upholding it.

“In the middle of a pandemic, and at a time when health care coverage for many Pennsylvanians is at risk, we must allow the people to have a voice in deciding the future of our country and our Supreme Court,” Gov. Wolf said. “That’s why I’m calling on Senator Toomey to uphold his own precedent from four years ago and commit to holding off on voting for or against any nominee to the Supreme Court until the general election is over and the next presidential term begins.

“Pennsylvanians have a right to affordable, accessible health care. And they deserve leaders who will fight for that right. The most important thing we can do right now to protect health care for Pennsylvanians is to protect the ACA.”

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