

“A lot of people are going to be left behind who can’t afford medical coverage”

Pittsburgh rally attendees discuss impact of health care cuts

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26 June 2017

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke with workers and young people who attended the Pittsburgh rally against the cuts to health care being pushed by the Trump administration. About 2,000 people attended the rally held Saturday evening organized by moveon.org and featuring Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders as the main speaker.

Sergei, 25, a student and part-time worker, explained that he is worried about the cost of his medications if he loses insurance. “I’m nervous as hell,” he said. “I have a preexisting condition. I’m bipolar, so this is going to drastically affect me once I am no longer able to receive my mom’s health care when I’m 27. I’m 25 right now. God knows how I’m going to get health insurance after that.

“Right now I rely on medication to keep me consistent. I’m paying \$20 a month, but I think they are like \$500 or \$600 a month, but I just pay \$20 because my health insurance covers so much of it. I get two medications. I know my friends who have mental health issues are on a lot more medications.

“It isn’t logical why they would want to harm so many people for a potential profit while everything else sort of crumbles. I can’t rationalize why an individual would want to hurt so many people.

“The tax cuts are disgusting and outrageous. Watching all this happen, the audacity and inhumanity of it. We are better than this. I think everyone should have health care and not have to worry about it.”

Pasial is from Europe but currently works in the US. He says that he was at the rally not for himself, but for all those people who don’t have health care and those

who will lose it if the Senate and House bills go through.

“It is not a health care bill,” he said. “It is about the transfer of wealth from the working class, from the working poor and the middle class to the wealthiest disguised as a health care bill. It has nothing to do with health.

“I teach at a university. My health care is paid by my university so my health care situation is relatively good. It is not about myself. It is about the country; many people don’t have the advantages that I have. I’m not complaining about my own personal situation, I’m complaining about an injustice.

“Health care is a basic condition for a person to have life and happiness. Access to health care is not a right for the wealthy, it is a right for everyone. It is a basic condition for life. It is not negotiable. The cost of this is going to be blood money for the wealthy.”

Herman, a retired worker, spoke on the Trump administration’s attack on health care and what it is going to mean for families and the elderly. “Trump is pathetic, he is an insult to humanity,” he said. “He is the liar. He is about the worst thing to hit the streets in the past 20 years. He has no sense of right and wrong. Whatever will make him a dollar off of anyone’s back he will do it.

“A lot of people are going to be hurt, going to be left behind who can’t afford medical coverage because this nut and this bag of nuts is going to cause a lot of people to suffer because they can’t get medical coverage. The Republicans have nothing at the moment. There are always means to improve some things, but this bill

wants to take everything away.

“Where are people going to go if they are cut? The biggest problem is that there are no jobs for people to make a decent living and pay for medical coverage. More and more people are going to be without. Not only medical coverage, but food, housing, gas, electricity, water—those things have to be paid for by everybody.”

Thekla Falls is a grandmother and came because of the impact of this on her granddaughter who was born with spina bifida, a debilitating birth defect in which the spinal column does not close all the way around the spinal cord.

“This is going to hurt her a lot,” she said. “I don’t like to talk about it because I will start crying. We want her to be as independent as possible and her treatments cost a lot of money.

“Both her mom and dad work. He works six days a week, every week so that they can afford her treatments. Right now she is able to get some help, but what is going to happen when this bill goes through? She will never be able to get health insurance.

“There are a lot of people out there who have medical conditions who can live better lives if they get treatment. If they take people’s insurance away they are going to destroy a lot of people’s lives. All these politicians care about is the rich and the rich just keep getting richer and richer.”

Jim and Sydney are both in the health care field. Jim is a health care provider and Sydney is studying health services at the University of Pittsburgh. Like many other health care providers who attended the rally, Jim and Sydney are worried about the impact of the bill on the access to health care.

Sydney said, “Seeing this act go through is kind of scary to me for the position that I am in. I want to help people and this is not what is going to help people. I am currently studying the inequalities in health care in the current system.

“The purpose of health services is to end the inequality of health care, to see to it that everyone has equal access to health care. Lots of minorities, and people with different social economic status, don’t have equal access to health care. This bill is just going to make it worse.

“My grandfather just had extensive abdominal surgery and he’s been in and out of the hospital. And

he has an incredible pension from the Pittsburgh Port Authority. And if he didn’t have that, he wouldn’t be getting the treatments that he had.

“I’m working and make more than the minimum wage and I can barely afford tuition. There is no way that someone making the minimum wage is going to be able to afford health insurance.”

Jim added, “I’m in the health care field as well and I am concerned about those who don’t have the means and how this is going to affect them. Many people have preexisting conditions and they will lose their health coverage because they can no longer afford it.”



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