MYTH: The ACA has caused premiums to skyrocket, making coverage unaffordable for many Illinoisans.

FACT: The ACA has slowed the growth of premiums while also providing critical protections and supports to everyone with health insurance.

Deductibles, out-of-pocket costs and premium rates were increasing dramatically before passage of the Affordable Care Act and undoubtedly would have continued to do so. Under the ACA, roughly 77 percent of Illinois Marketplace consumers receive tax credits to offset any rate increases. Furthermore, nearly 1 million Illinoisans have gained insurance under the ACA.

The marketplaces were designed to allow consumers to shop year-to-year in a new way, and those who do shop around find better rates. The ACA supports a robust system of enrollment assisters, navigators and others who are able to provide in-person assistance to consumers to help them find an affordable plan best-suited to meet their needs.

New markets take time to stabilize and the marketplaces are evolving from year-to-year as enrollment numbers increase and insurers adjust for initial market pricing. In 2016, two of the premium stabilization programs that were included as a part of the ACA to help the new market get started ended. Importantly, the payouts to insurers were slashed by Congress, which resulted in insurance companies receiving a fraction of what they expected to help offset the cost of sick members.

MYTH: The ACA has resulted in drastic cuts to the Medicare program.

FACT: The ACA has strengthened the Medicare program and provided more benefits to seniors.

Since the passage of the ACA, Medicare beneficiaries have seen dramatic improvements in prescription drug costs, no-cost preventive services and new integrated models of care for those receiving both Medicare and Medicaid. The ACA reduces prescription drug prices for seniors and closes the coverage gap, known as the “donut hole.” This has improved coverage for 2.1 million seniors in Illinois.

Medicare beneficiaries in Illinois have already saved over $235.3 million on prescription drugs since the passage of the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act will completely close the prescription drug “donut hole” by 2020.

Do no harm. No ACA repeal without replace.
A health care system that is truly affordable and accessible to all, especially individuals with pre-existing conditions, requires a foundation of a diverse risk pool comprised of individuals who are healthy to help spread risk and the cost of care. If everyone waited for an illness or major medical event to purchase health insurance, then the cost of insurance would skyrocket. Just like auto insurance or home owners’ insurance, health insurance is based on the idea that most people don’t need to use it most of the time, but we rely on these forms of insurance to protect us financially from unpredictable emergencies.

Every person in our country will use the health care system at some point in their lives, and if a person is uninsured when they need access to care, the cost of that care is absorbed by providers and insurers and passed onto consumers who are already paying for insurance.

The Affordable Care Act has delegated a significant amount of control and power to states to meet the needs of their residents. Illinois has been able to construct our marketplace, Get Covered Illinois, in the way that meets our residents’ needs, while maintaining a minimum level of coverage, transparency and cost control established through the Affordable Care Act. Illinois also has the statutory authority to manage our own insurance market and to work with health insurers in our state to offer plans that meet our residents’ needs.

Beginning in 2017, the Affordable Care Act gives states, including Illinois, even more flexibility to customize how health insurance is delivered using a Section 1332 state innovation waiver, while still guaranteeing that residents have access to robust and affordable coverage.

The ACA created transparent markets where they did not exist before. The ACA encourages real competition by offering private plan choices in state-based and federal marketplaces. Consumers now have the ability to shop around and seek one-on-one assistance, while gaining the peace of mind and financial security of having health coverage. At the same time, consumers gained protections that prevent them from losing coverage due to pre-existing conditions or reaching arbitrary caps on care.

Illinoisans can’t afford a repeal of the ACA.