CMS Guidance Puts Millions of Americans with Pre-Existing Conditions at Risk

Leading National Patient and Consumer Organizations Urge CMS to Withdraw Guidance That Would Threaten Patients’ Ability to Access Lifesaving Care

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 24, 2018 — More than 25 patient and consumer groups representing millions of people nationwide with pre-existing health conditions issued the following statement in response to administration guidance issued on October 22nd that gives states greater ability to skirt patient protections included in the Affordable Care Act:

“The guidance issued by the Administration gives states free reign to undermine critical protections for millions of Americans living with pre-existing conditions. Issued under the guise of “state flexibility”, the guidance allows states to approve the sale of cheap, inadequate health insurance plans that can eliminate coverage of pre-existing conditions, charge premiums based on health status, or reject patients altogether. This guidance also greenlights changes that are likely to make it harder for patients and consumers to distinguish between comprehensive coverage and products that do not cover prescription medications, maternity care, or other critical services. Further, states will also be able to use taxpayer dollars to subsidize the purchase of these substandard insurance plans.

“This dangerous action could take us back to the days when people with pre-existing conditions were openly discriminated against and blatantly denied access to lifesaving care.
“Our organizations advocate for everyone with pre-existing conditions to have access to healthcare that is affordable, adequate, and accessible. We are deeply disappointed that this guidance undermines protections for people with pre-existing conditions, and we urge the Administration to withdraw it immediately.”

Adult Congenital Heart Association  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Diabetes Association  
American Heart Association  
American Liver Foundation  
American Lung Association  
Arthritis Foundation  
COPD Foundation  
Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Global Healthy Living Foundation  
Hemophilia Federation of America  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
Lutheran Services in America  
March of Dimes  
Mended Little Hearts  
Muscular Dystrophy Association  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship  
National Health Council  
National Hemophilia Foundation  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
National Patient Advocate Foundation  
National Psoriasis Foundation  
Susan G. Komen  
United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc.  
United Way Worldwide  
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

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