Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom to U.S. Senate: Say ‘No’ to Costly, Controlling ‘Doc Fix’ Bill

Bill Will Create Doctors Who Are More Concerned with Checkboxes Than Patients and Will Share Too Much Private Data

ST. PAUL, Minn.—Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom (CCHF, www.cchfreedom.org), a Minnesota-based national organization dedicated to preserving patient-centered health care and protecting patient and privacy rights, is urging the U.S. Senate to say “no” to the costly and controlling “Doc Fix” bill that would rate doctors based on compliance rather than care, expand Obamacare payment systems, and expand intrusive Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems.

The significant Medicare reform bill, H.R. 2, already passed the U.S. House of Representatives and would repeal Medicare’s “Sustainable Growth Rate” (SGR). According to Forbes.com, H.R. 2 would “spend hundreds of billions of dollars increasing payments to doctors under Medicare, while modestly increasing Medicare premiums for upper-income retirees.” The President has indicated he will sign the legislation.

CCHF is urging the U.S. Senate, which now has the bill in its hands, to say “no” to the proposed law as written.

“The ‘Doc Fix’ bill is simply a boost to Obamacare and the overarching federal plan to place controls over the entire practice of medicine,” said Twila Brase, CCHF co-founder and president. “It will impose oppressive long-term federal controls over physician treatment decisions in Medicare. One danger is the creation of a Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) for paying doctors based on government-approved ‘performance’. The MIPS acronym is mentioned 148 times in the bill. If enacted, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) will create a ‘methodology for assessing the total performance’ of each physician each year and will use troubling ‘performance categories’ such as quality, resource use, clinical practice improvement activities and meaningful use of certified EHR technology.

“This is yet another attempt by the federal government to push doctors and clinicians into dumping their patients’ private medical information into one giant, ‘on-the-grid,’ unsecure system that is subject to hacking, as well as accessible to millions of entities,” Brase continued. “The ‘Doc Fix’ bill doesn’t fix anything, but endangers the practice of medicine in America, the confidential patient-doctor relationship and access to individualized care.”
Brase added that financial penalties will be dispersed according to doctors’ “composite performance score.” Physicians who fail to meet government compliance standards will be penalized with reductions in Medicare reimbursements starting at 4 percent in 2019 and growing to 9 percent in 2022 and beyond. Physicians who fail to report performance data to HHS will be “treated as achieving the lowest potential score” and will be guaranteed a penalty.

“H.R. 2 supports Obamacare’s ‘value-based purchasing’ system—paying doctors for government-defined ‘value’ instead of for services given,” Brase said. “Additionally, it strengthens an ACA provision intended to advance the rationing of care.”

Specifically, Brase says, objectives regarding EHR interoperability should be removed from the language of H.R. 2, namely a national objective to achieve widespread exchange of health information through interoperable certified EHR technology nationwide by Dec. 31, 2018.

“EHR interoperability should never happen by government force and should never happen until the HIPAA rule is rescinded and patient consent requirements restored,” Brase said. “EHR companies should not be forced to become public utilities for the federal objective of controlling medical decisions and tracking patients, and there should be no payment adjustments for physicians and others who choose not to participate in this intrusive system. Furthermore, patients should not be analyzed and experimented upon at the bedside through a national EHR system and outside control of treatment decisions, as the Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology (ONC) Interoperability Roadmap calls for through a proposed ‘Learning Health System.’”

For more information about CCHF, visit its web site at www.cchfreedom.org, its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cchfreedom or its Twitter feed, @CCHFreedom.

Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom, a patient-centered national health freedom organization based in St. Paul, Minn., exists to protect health care choices and patient privacy. CCHF sponsors the daily, 60-second radio feature, Health Freedom Minute, which airs on approximately 350 stations nationwide, including 200 on the American Family Radio Network and 100 on the Bott Radio Network. Listeners can learn more about the agenda behind health care initiatives and steps they can take to protect their health care choices, rights and privacy.

CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase, R.N., has been called one of the “100 Most Powerful People in Health Care” and one of “Minnesota’s 100 Most Influential Health Care Leaders.” A public health nurse, Brase has been interviewed by CNN, Fox News, Minnesota Public Radio, NBC Nightly News, NBC’s Today Show, NPR, New York Public Radio, the Associated Press, Modern Healthcare, TIME, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and The Washington Times, among others. She is at the forefront of informing the public of crucial health issues, such as intrusive wellness and prevention initiatives in Obamacare, patient privacy, informed consent, the dangers of “evidence-based medicine” and the implications of state and federal health care reform.

For more information or to interview Twila Brase, president and co-founder of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom, contact Deborah Hamilton at 215-815-7716 or 610-584-1096, or Beth Harrison at 610-584-1096, Media@HamiltonStrategies.com.