***NEWS RELEASE***

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If You Like Your Premium, You Can’t Keep It

Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom Says Consolidation Caused by Less Competition Means Patients Will Pay More

ST. PAUL, Minn.—Health insurance customers are paying a lot more than they used to. And patients have Obamacare to thank. Lack of health care competition resulting from insurers’ leaving the market means premiums have nowhere to go but up.

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, says when health insurers are forced to close their doors due to the Affordable Care Act, players in the health care industry are consolidated—and patients get hit with higher prices.

“Increased rates are an unavoidable result of consolidation because smaller insurers are dropping out of offering insurance due to the exorbitant costs and numerous regulations of Obamacare,” said CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase. “The Department of Health and Human Services can review these prices but can do nothing about escalating rates—so there’s nowhere to go but up.”

Brase recently reported in her weekly Health Freedom eNews that the latest casualty of the Affordable Care Act is the 123-year-old Assurant Inc., a Wisconsin-based health insurance company, which announced it would either sell or close its doors after losing millions of dollars in the last two years.

“Assurant declared it lost money because Obamacare regulations limit risk recoveries and ban medical underwriting—the adjustment of premiums based upon medical history, age, etc.” Brase said. “This year, Assurant has already experienced operating losses of $80 million to $90 million.”
Brase added that other health insurers have also gone out of business—or dropped out of Obamacare altogether—because of the faulty and poorly managed federal health care plan.

“Only Big Insurance and Big Government win, because the smaller insurers are pushed out due to rising costs and innumerable Obamacare regulations,” Brase continued. “And after the ‘big guys’ win, premium prices will climb higher and higher, and individuals and small employers will be hit the hardest with the increased prices. Big insurers will own the corner market on coverage because the competition has been pushed out by Obamacare.”

Next year, Obamacare premium prices will take another jump. According to an article in the Washington Examiner, “large insurers selling coverage through Obamacare have proposed massive rate increases for 2016 – even exceeding 40 percent – because they haven't been able to sign up enough young and healthy customers.”

The Senate Republican Policy Committee, chaired by Sen. John Barrasso (R.-Wyo.) also reported that new Obamacare mandates and regulations caused individual market premiums to increase by nearly 50 percent between 2013 and 2014.

Brase added that there are several additional reasons for rising rates, including the “Three Rs” in Obamacare: reinsurance, risk adjustment and risk corridors.

Taxpayer subsidies to health plans through reinsurance and risk corridors—which redistribute dollars to health plans that report the highest cost and riskiest patients—will be no more by the end of 2016. And, Brase added, risk adjustment in Medicare Advantage Plans is already proving fraudulent.

If it weren’t for $10 billion in reinsurance subsidies, through which insurers get payments from Washington to cover most of the cost of their enrollees who have high annual claims, Obamacare premiums would be even higher, according to the Committee’s report, which added, “Through the reinsurance program, by offsetting the cost incurred by expensive enrollees, the program allowed insurers to charge lower rates for Obamacare plans.”

By 2017, reinsurance will be a thing of the past.
“Simply put, Obamacare raised the cost of coverage for everyone. The administration shielded the public from this reality using a three-year redistribution scheme,” Brase said. “That shield disappears in 2017, but insurers are already raising the rates because young healthy people won’t pay the high price of coverage now. Insurers may also be trying to avoid an even larger increase for 2017. While the exchanges struggle to survive, the real unraveling of Obamacare could happen if citizens refuse to pay the price to keep it alive.”

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 is a patient-centered national health freedom organization based in St. Paul, Minn., that 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 ext. 102, or Beth Harrison at 610-584-1096 ext. 104, Media@HamiltonStrategies.com.