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**Congress Should Not Take Advantage of the COVID-19 Crisis to Impose Price Controls on Doctors**

*News Report Claims Discussions Taking Place in Senate*

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom (CCHF) opposes any last-minute attempt by the U.S. Senate HELP committee, as reported by Modern Healthcare, to use COVID-19 legislation to impose price controls on physicians as a way of solving surprise medical bills.

“While physicians are preoccupied with the COVID-19 pandemic and risking their lives on the front lines, the Senate should not be seeking to impose destructive price controls on physicians. Congress should not give health plans the authority to set payment rates for doctors who have no contracts with those health plans,” said Twila Brase, president and co-founder of CCHF.

Government-mandated benchmarks (i.e. rate-setting) to determine rates for out-of-network physicians would be devastating to the practice of medicine and to the right of physicians to set their own prices. Brase said doctors that cannot afford the health plan’s reduced rates would likely exit the practice of medicine.

“Nearly half of all physicians are considering an exodus from the practice of medicine, while 10,000 baby boomers enter Medicare every day,” she said. “Government price controls would give doctors another reason to leave, reducing patient access to physician care and medical expertise. In a time when more patients than ever will be needing care, we need more doctors available to treat them – not less.”

“With coronavirus on the loose, the U.S. Senate should be focusing on the needs of our country, rather than taking advantage of a national emergency to impose harmful and unconstitutional price controls,” Brase stated.

In 2019, CCHF sent a letter to President Trump providing his administration with an alternative solution to surprise billing:

“To solve the problem of surprise bills, Congress should forbid false advertising by health plans and facilities. Congress should continue to promote price transparency, and also resurrect medical indemnity insurance so patients can go to any doctor in any facility and are not caught out of a network unaware,” Brase concluded.
CCHF maintains a patient-centered, privacy-focused, free-market perspective. CCHF has worked in its home state of Minnesota and at the national level for more than 20 years to protect health care choices, individualized patient care, and medical and genetic privacy rights. In 2016, CCHF launched The Wedge of Health Freedom, an online directory of direct-pay practices (JointheWedge.com)

Twila Brase, RN, PHN has been named by Modern Healthcare as one of the “100 Most Powerful People in Health Care.” She is the host of the daily Health Freedom Minute radio program heard by over 5 million weekly listeners on more than 800 radio stations nationwide, and the author of the four-time award-winning book, “Big Brother in the Exam Room: The Dangerous Truth About Electronic Health Records.”

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