

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

For Immediate Release
June 10, 2019

Citizens' Council for Health Freedom Urges President Trump to Delink Medicare and Social Security

***CCHF Leading the Charge with 43 Other Groups to Call on the President
to Right This Health Care Wrong Through Executive Action***

ST. PAUL, Minn.—[***Citizens' Council for Health Freedom \(CCHF\)***](#) has sent a letter to President Donald Trump with an urgent request that will impact nearly every American as they age.

CCHF and dozens of other respected organizations are urging the president and his administration to allow senior citizens to voluntarily opt-out of Medicare—without losing their Social Security benefits.

The effort began in November, when ***CCHF*** and 37 other groups petitioned the president. Six more groups and a health policy expert have signed on and are listed in the most recent [***June 6 letter***](#). Additional organization signers include Americans for Prosperity, Americans for Tax Reform, Concerned Veterans for America, Physicians for Patients, Practicing Physicians of America, Samaritan Ministries International.

“With these additions, a total of 44 organizations across America plus one health policy expert are asking for your help to fix this problem,” CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase wrote to Trump. “As we wrote in November, current administrative procedures ‘unlawfully condition seniors’ access to Social Security retirement benefits on Medicare enrollment.’ We asked you ‘to rescind, by executive action’ these procedures.

“Mr. President, you can fix this problem,” Brase added. “You have the authority to reverse this unfair and misguided policy, which is not a law or a rule. It is an internal, subregulatory instruction, inserted into a program operations manual, without congressional authorization, and without public notice-and-comment rulemaking. Because the change was made without legal authority, it can—and should—be reversed. Because it was instituted administratively, it can be reversed in the same manner.”

Members of Congress share ***CCHF***'s concern about the conditionality of Medicare and Social Security. In April, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Congressman Gary Palmer (R-AL) introduced [***S. 1030***](#) and [***H.R. 2108***](#), respectively—the Retirement Freedom Act.

According to Cruz, “The Retirement Freedom Act would empower our seniors with the power of choice by providing them with the freedom to choose healthcare that best suits their needs. Right now, seniors across the country are forced to enroll in Medicare Part A or risk losing their Social Security benefits if they take the steps to choose other healthcare options.”

CCHF says it is pleased to see the legislation reintroduced, but notes that the Trump administration does not have to wait for the legislative process. President Trump could right this administrative wrong by simply requiring these executive instructions to be removed from the SSA handbook, which is what the groups have requested in their joint letter.

“With a simple stroke of your pen,” CCHF added to the president, “you can bring freedom to millions of Americans, now and into the future, by allowing them to choose the medical coverage that works best for them while improving the financial strength of Medicare for those dependent on it.”

In addition, **CCHF** notes, if seniors opt-out of Medicare at a later date, these administrative procedures require them to repay all Medicare and Social Security benefits they have received.

In the past, Brase added, Americans could waive their Medicare benefits, if they wished, without losing their Social Security. In practice, few availed themselves of this option. Unfortunately, under present procedures, initiated by prior administrations without congressional approval, no one may receive Social Security benefits if they decline Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) benefits.

This leaves seniors with few coverage options today except Medicare because private insurers, as a general rule, decline to cover people who are enrolled in or eligible for Medicare. As a result, Medicare has become, for all practical purposes, the only medical coverage available to elderly Americans, even if they have other preferred coverage they could retain and are willing to pay for.

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