Stacking the Deck Against Patients

Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom: Committee Members Under the ‘Doc Fix’ Bill Decide How Doctors Will Be Paid

ST. PAUL, Minn.—There’s trouble ahead for doctors and patients, says Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom (CCHF, www.cchfreedom.org), a patient-centered national health freedom organization based in St. Paul, Minn., existing to protect health care choices, individualized patient care, and medical and genetic privacy rights.

Earlier this month, the 11 members of the Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee were announced. It includes seven physicians to advise the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) on how to pay doctors differently. Republicans established the committee in the “Doc Fix” bill, or MACRA—the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

“Whatever is bad for doctors will not be good for patients,” CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase recently stated in her CCHF eNews commentary. “MACRA effectively ends physician payment for actual care provided. Starting in 2019, bonuses will be added or penalties deducted from physician reimbursement based on ‘value,’ ‘quality,’ ‘clinical improvement,’ ‘resource use’ and ‘meaningful use’ of Electronic Health Records (EHRs), as defined by government. This will encourage rationing of care.”

CCHF has frequently and publicly opposed MACRA, and even the Medicare actuary warned Congress that the new payment system would be worse for doctors than the hated Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) payment system MACRA repealed, Brase said.

“Practicing physicians won’t have a real voice,” Brase added, “as MACRA prohibits more than five ‘providers of services’—fewer than half—as committee members. Furthermore, public access to the documents and deliberations of the committee is prohibited by MACRA: ‘Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Committee.’”

Of the seven members with M.D. behind their names, she continued, just three appear to be “providers of services” in some capacity. The M.D. credentials will give the appearance of a committee whose decisions will be in the best interest of patients—unless you look closer. Several have worked as government officials, health plan employees, or government committee members. At
least four of the doctors specialize in public health or “population-based health,” a fancy name for national health care that is antithetical to ethical, individualized patient care. Read more on the committee members here.

“The MDs on this committee are biased toward managed care and outside controls,” Brase said. “Expect recommendations that reward doctors who agree to exchange their professional, ethical and Hippocratic obligations to patients for the financial benefits of complying with standardized treatment protocols, data reporting and the ‘population-based’ national health care agenda.”

Brase addresses the most pressing health care topics during CCHF’s daily, 60-second Health Freedom Minute radio feature. Heard on approximately 350 stations nationwide, including 200 on the American Family Radio Network and 100 on the Bott Radio Network, Health Freedom Minute helps listeners learn more about the agenda behind health care initiatives, as well as steps they can take to protect their health care choices, rights and privacy.

Recent Health Freedom Minute topics have included the new ICD-10 medical coding system, patient profiling, hospital fraud, medical data privacy, patient outcomes and socialized medicine. The one-minute program is free for stations to run; for details, contact Michael Hamilton at mhamilton@hamiltonstrategies.com or (610) 584-1096 or (215) 519-4838.

This Thursday, Oct. 22, CCHF will host a special event, “Breaking Free from Obamacare,” with two conservative superstars. At its annual fundraising dinner, CCHF will welcome keynote speaker Dan Bongino, former Secret Service agent, bestselling author, the 2014 CPAC “Top 10 Under 40” Award Winner, guest radio host for Sean Hannity and Mark Levine, and a regular guest on Fox News, CNN, MSNBC and more. A special guest at the event will be Rich Weinstein, the “Father of Grubergate,” who discovered the videos where Affordable Care Act architect Jonathan Gruber admitted to deception to pass Obamacare.

The evening will enable CCHF to do what it does best—protect patients and doctors from government encroachment; distill complex health care issues into the easy-to-understand Health Freedom Minutes that air on more than 350 radio stations across the country; target the Achilles’ heel of health care policy; and keep the business of health care from destroying the caring mission of medicine. Click here for more information on the Oct. 22 event in Minneapolis.

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.

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.