

**\*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\***

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## **HHS Implements Tight Holiday Review Periods for Pending Regulations**

*Timing Discourages Public Comment, Suggests a Desire for Secrecy in Passing New Healthcare Regulations*

**Key Facts:**

- Of six proposed regulations with regard to Obamacare to be implemented by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, four only allow a 30-day review and comment period.
- Of the four regulations requiring tight timeframe for comment, the deadline for two is December 26, 2012 and for the two remaining the deadline is January 5, 2013.
- The [Citizens' Council for Health Freedom \(CCHF\)](http://www.cchfreedom.org) asserts that the tight timing and holiday review period suggests that the government would like to limit public comment on the pending healthcare regulations.
- CCHF urges citizens to contact their elected lawmakers to demand that the public comment period be extended to 90 days in all instances.

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is petitioning the American public for comment on a total of six new regulations related to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as the ACA law. Two regulations have an adequate amount of time to read, understand, and comment on the proposed regulations, but four, including the 373-page the “Head Tax” rule that adds a monthly fee to all insurance premiums to cover the cost of individuals with pre-existing conditions, have only a 30-day window for public comment, and the timeframe falls over the winter holidays that include Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and New Year’s. The four bills total nearly 750 pages of regulation, clearly a large amount to read, absorb, and understand in thirty days.

The [Citizens' Council for Health Freedom](#) finds the timing very suspicious.

***“The point of offering public comment about pending laws or legislative rules is to understand and respond to public sentiment about a particular rule or regulation, and it is a process that is mandated by law before such rules are adopted,” said Twila Brase, President of the Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom. “It is obvious that HHS is intentionally restricting public comments for regulations that will likely be contentious. The timeframe is short and limited to the holiday period to restrict public comments. American citizens should be asking why and insisting that the timeframe be extended to accommodate both a full review of and thoughtful comments about the regulations.”***

According to the **CCHF**, the pending rules can significantly change or impact the way healthcare is provided or managed in America, and the changes are not necessarily positive. Take the “Benefit and Payment Parameters,” which creates rules for new insurance fees, assesses new, individualized risk scores that can increase care costs, and also redistributes funds from those without pre-existing conditions to those that have them. The potential impact on both costs and quality of care is noteworthy and should be reason enough to provide a longer timeframe for public comment.

***“All Americans should be concerned about the impact of these proposed rules and should be given the time to read, understand and provide comments to HHS about them,” concluded Brase. “And if the period for public comment is too restrictive, they should certainly contact their legislators to insist that the timeframe for public comment be extended.”***

The rules and regulations referenced are available for public consumption [online](#). The **CCHF** recommends that citizens submit a simple statement to the HHS to urge them to extend the public comment deadline. The organization suggested the following language in a recent newsletter: “The public comment period for the proposed rule should be extended. Thirty days during a busy holiday season is poor timing and not enough time to read and respond to hundreds of pages of information. Please extend the comment period to 90 days and inform me of the change when it occurs.”

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**Twila Brase** is president and co-founder of the **Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom**. She has been called one of the “100 Most Powerful People in Health Care” and one of “Minnesota’s 100 Most Influential Health Care Leaders.” The Council’s efforts have stopped government-issued treatment directives, added informed consent requirements for access to patient data and defeated a proposed Health Insurance Exchange. Brase’s daily radio commentary, **Health Freedom Minute**, is a 60-second radio address on pressing health care issues. She 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.