Dangerous Bedfellows

Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom Says ‘Historic Cooperation’ between Government, Hospitals Bad for Patients

ST. PAUL, Minn.—U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Sylvia Burwell recently praised a “historic cooperation” between government and hospitals.

But 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 this is one historic event that’s no cause for celebration.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced that HHS is “working in concert with our partners in the private, public, and non-profit sectors to transform the nation’s health system to emphasize value over volume.” But three dangerous CMS initiatives in this effort will take patient care and medical decisions out of doctors’ hands and put them in the hands of government bureaucrats who are more concerned with payments than with patient care,” said CCHF co-founder and president Twila Brase. “This aim to ‘transform health care’ will change the way doctors practice medicine. Ultimately, doctors will be forced to conform to federal rules and regulations in order to be paid, and the patient, in the end, will be the one to suffer.”

The three initiatives that are cause for concern are:

1. The Health Care Payment Learning Action Network, which aims to tie “30 percent of Medicare fee-for-service payments to quality or value through alternative payment models by 2016 and 50 percent by 2018. HHS has also set a goal of tying 85 percent of all Medicare fee-for-service to quality or value by 2016 and 90 percent by 2018.” Brase says value and quality will be defined by government, not patients and doctors.
2. The Transforming Clinical Practice Initiatives, which has already been allocated more than $800 million to make sure physician and clinician practices are in line with “quality improvement strategies.” This initiative’s stated aim is “to help clinicians achieve large-scale
health transformation.” Brase says quality improvement is often a euphemism for physician compliance with the way government wants medicine practiced.

3. The Nationwide Interoperability Roadmap, which “will provide a pathway for the public and private sectors to work together to free up data so patients and providers can securely access their health information when and where they need it.” Brase says this data roadmap—which supports collecting data not only on health but also on social and economic habits—will make private patient data unsecure and available to potentially millions of entities for ongoing analysis and third-party payment decisions.

“Over the years, as third party payment has grown, hospitals have become less of a charitable organization and more of a big business. The ACO provisions in Obamacare, which put the financial risk of care on hospitals, further endanger the longstanding patient-centered focus of health care,” Brase said. “This new three-prong effort is a combination of Big Business, Big Health and Big Government all working cooperatively to seize control of the health care system, taking it out of the hands of patients and doctors. Such collaboration will advance, not deter, government control over medical decisions.

“Initiatives like this are an indication that the mission of medicine is moving to the business of health care,” Brase continued. “Restoring the mission of medicine to patient care will require a departure from most third-party payments, a switch from prepaid health plans back to catastrophic coverage, cash payments for routine and minor care, access to lifelong health insurance policies and enacting laws that allow Medicare recipients to pay cash for care Medicare denies and to leave Medicare without losing their social security payments.”

For more information about CCHF and its “5C” Solution for Health Care, 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, a patient-centered national health freedom organization based in St. Paul, Minn., 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, Media@HamiltonStrategies.com.