



July 12, 2017

Ms. Seema Verma, MPH, CMS  
Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Verma:

On behalf of the Coalition for Patients' Rights (CPR), which represents more than 30 non-MD/DO (Medical Doctor / Doctor of Osteopathy) health care professional organizations across the country, we write in response to the request for information on Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Reducing Regulatory Burdens and Improving Health Care Choices to Empower Patients as posted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on June 12, 2017.

CPR is the collective voice for non-MD/DO health care professionals who provide safe, high-quality, cost-effective health care services to millions of patients each year. We exist because we stand by the principle that patients want and should have access to a comprehensive choice of health care providers without undue restrictions. As such, it is important for us to respond to CMS's request for information by reinforcing our previous comments that the provider non-discrimination clause in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Section 2706(a), Title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act) must be fully implemented. We believe that CMS should revise existing guidance regarding Section 2706(a) to include specific enforcement guidance and thus give consumers more choices when it comes to selecting health care providers.

Given that empowering patients and promoting consumer choice is one of the Department's listed goals with respect to the preservation of individual and small group health insurance markets, it is important to not only preserve but to enforce the non-discrimination clause. Doing so will result in increased access to care, an important overall goal for the health of our nation.

Since the provisions of 2706(a) went into effect Jan. 1, 2014, there is only a single known instance of private health insurer compliance with the statute. The intention that state network adequacy rules drive compliance clearly has not worked. Much more direct and stronger enforcement is needed.

We urge you to preserve and implement the non-discrimination clause of the ACA so that the full range of non-MD/DO healthcare professionals can simultaneously improve the quality of patient care, while ensuring patient choice and access to care in the health care marketplace.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. CPR is available for your questions related to this critical health care issue.

Sincerely,

Coalition for Patients' Rights