



American Heart Association®



AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION®



Arthritis Foundation®



CROHN'S & COLITIS FOUNDATION



CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION®
ADDING TOMORROWS™



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Hemophilia Federation of America™



LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY®



Lutheran Services in America



MS®
National Multiple Sclerosis Society



NORD®
National Organization for Rare Disorders



NATIONAL PSORIASIS FOUNDATION®



MARCH OF DIMES

July 6, 2018

Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC

Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Re: Maine Section 1332 Waiver Comments

Dear Secretary Azar and Secretary Mnuchin:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Maine's Section 1332 State Innovation Waiver Application.

The undersigned organizations represent millions of individuals facing serious, acute and chronic health conditions across the country. Our organizations have a unique perspective on what patients need to prevent disease, cure illness and manage chronic health conditions. The diversity of our groups and the patients and consumers we represent enables us to draw upon a wealth of knowledge and expertise and serve as an invaluable resource regarding any decisions affecting state health insurance marketplaces and the patients that they serve. We urge the Department to make the best use of the recommendations, knowledge and experience our organizations offer here.

Our organizations are committed to ensuring that any changes to the healthcare system achieve coverage that is adequate, affordable and accessible for patients. A strong, robust marketplace is essential for people with serious, acute and chronic health conditions to access comprehensive coverage that includes all of the treatments and services that they need to stay healthy at an affordable cost. Our organizations support Maine's efforts to strengthen its marketplace by submitting this 1332 State Innovation Waiver to implement a reinsurance program, and we urge the Departments to approve the application.

Reinsurance is an important tool to help stabilize health insurance markets. Reinsurance programs help insurance companies cover the claims of very high cost enrollees, which in turn keeps premiums affordable for other individuals buying insurance on the individual market. Reinsurance programs have been used to stabilize premiums in a number of healthcare programs, such as Medicare Part D. A temporary reinsurance fund for the individual market was also established under the Affordable Care Act and reduced premiums by an estimated 10 to 14 percent in its first year.ⁱ In Minnesota, a state already implementing a reinsurance program through a 1332 waiver approved last year, insurers recently filed proposed rates for 2019 that were between 3 and 12.4 percent below 2018 premiums.ⁱⁱ

Under Maine's proposal, the state would implement a reinsurance program starting for the 2019 plan year and continuing for five years, with an option to renew for an additional five years. According to the state's analysis, this program is projected to reduce premiums by nine percent in 2019 and increase the number of individuals obtaining health insurance through the individual market by 1.1 percent. A reinsurance program would help patients with pre-existing conditions obtain affordable, comprehensive coverage. We urge the federal government to ensure that this reinsurance program is designed in a transparent manner with adequate opportunities for consumer input so that the program meets the needs of patients with pre-existing conditions.

As states consider different ways to stabilize their marketplaces, our organizations are pleased that Maine has submitted an application that is projected to improve coverage and affordability without compromising access to essential health benefits or jeopardizing other important protections that our patients rely on. Our organizations believe that this Section 1332 State Innovation Waiver will help stabilize the individual market in Maine and help patients and consumers, and we urge the Departments to quickly approve the application. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

American Heart Association
American Lung Association
Arthritis Foundation
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation
Hemophilia Federation of America
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Lutheran Services in America
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Psoriasis Foundation
March of Dimes

ⁱ American Academy of Actuaries, Individual and Small Group Markets Committee. *An Evaluation of the Individual Health Insurance Market and Implications of Potential Changes*. January 2017. Retrieved from https://www.actuary.org/files/publications/Acad_eval_indiv_mkt_011817.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Minnesota Department of Commerce. *Insurers' 2019 Proposed Health Insurance Rates*. Retrieved from <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/your-insurance/health-insurance/rates/rate-filings/2019/>.