



Patient Groups Strongly Oppose Medicaid Block Grant Approval

Approval of Tennessee's Medicaid waiver jeopardizes care for patients in midst of a pandemic

WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 8, 2021) – 21 patient and consumer groups issued the following statement regarding the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approval of Tennessee's 1115 demonstration waiver, which would block grant federal funding for the state's Medicaid program.

“Our organizations strongly oppose the Administration’s approval of Tennessee’s block grant waiver. This is a reckless move that would reduce Tennesseans’ ability to get needed healthcare. Medicaid coverage is critical to helping our nation’s most vulnerable patients access care, especially in the midst of a global pandemic.

“Our organizations have clearly and repeatedly voiced our [deep concerns with Tennessee’s proposal](#), as well as our [strong opposition to block grants in Medicaid in general](#). Per capita caps and block grants are designed to cap or limit the amount of federal funding provided to states, forcing them to either make up the difference with their own funds or make cuts to their programs reducing access to care for the patients we represent. Program cuts will likely result in enrollment limits, benefit reductions, reductions in provider payments or increased out-of-pocket cost-sharing for Medicaid enrollees. The approval specifically includes authority to limit prescription drug coverage, a dangerous proposal for patients.

“Since our organizations filed comments on Tennessee’s proposal nearly one year ago, our nation has been overwhelmed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and our concerns about how Tennessee’s proposal will harm patients with serious and chronic health conditions have only intensified. It is irresponsible to approve this waiver during this public health crisis, and especially to do so for an unprecedented 10-year

period. This waiver agreement, if implemented, will limit Tennessee’s flexibility in responding to recessions, pandemics, new treatments and natural disasters – and as a consequence moves in the opposite direction of the lessons learned from 2020.

“Our organizations strongly urge the incoming Administration to halt implementation of this waiver and urge Governor Bill Lee and Tennessee lawmakers to reject this bad deal for patients in Tennessee.”

American Lung Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
Arthritis Foundation
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation
Hemophilia Federation of America
Lutheran Services in America
March of Dimes
Muscular Dystrophy Association
Mended Hearts & Mended Little Hearts
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Health Council
National Hemophilia Foundation
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Patient Advocate Foundation
Susan G. Komen
The AIDS Institute
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
United Way Worldwide