



THE PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDICAID

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Partnership for Medicaid to HHS: Retract Proposed Changes to Section 1557 Protections

WASHINGTON — The Partnership for Medicaid, a nonpartisan, nationwide coalition of health care providers, safety-net health plans, counties, and labor, has called on the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights to withdraw a proposed rule that would remove protections against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age and disability.

The OCR has proposed changes to Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, which currently prevents health insurers, health care providers and others from discriminatory practices. If implemented, the proposal would narrow the definition of sex discrimination, allow insurers to charge more or refuse coverage for certain medical conditions and people with disabilities, and limit access to care for individuals with limited English proficiency, the coalition said in a [letter to Roger Severino, director of the HHS Office for Civil Rights](#).

Under the proposal, certain federal health programs and health insurers would not be required to comply with Section 1557. Moreover, nondiscrimination protections for gender and sexual identity would be eliminated in regulations that govern state Medicaid programs, Medicaid managed care organizations, and Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly organizations.

“Prior to passage of the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies commonly charged people with disabilities more for their care,” the coalition wrote. “In addition, people with disabilities were often subject to coverage denials for certain conditions or health services and were routinely denied coverage altogether. Under the proposed rule, discriminatory practices in health care could once again become the norm, jeopardizing the care for more than 40 million Americans with a disability, including over 10 million who qualify for Medicaid because of a disability.”

Additionally, by eliminating language access plans for the health care industry, the proposed rule would seriously restrict information about access to services and health insurance for the 25 million people with limited English proficiency living in the U.S.

“The Partnership for Medicaid urges OCR to withdraw this proposed rule in its entirety,” the coalition letter says. “If finalized, Medicaid’s most vulnerable beneficiaries will be exposed to unnecessary harm.”

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The Partnership for Medicaid is a nonpartisan, nationwide coalition made up of organizations representing doctors, health care providers, safety net health plans, counties and labor. The goal of the coalition is to preserve and improve the Medicaid program.

The Partnership for Medicaid seeks to raise awareness about the vital role played by the Medicaid program, which provides essential health care services to more than 58 million people. By working in a bipartisan manner with all levels of government and affected constituency groups, we seek to provide viable solutions to improving the quality and delivery of services, with the aim of constraining costs without undermining the program's fundamental goals.

Above all, **The Partnership for Medicaid** is a unified voice to ensure that Medicaid continues its crucial role as a strong safety net for vulnerable Americans.