



via electronic submission

July 26, 2019

Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Re: ACS CAN's Comments on Proposed 1332 Waiver

Dear Administrator Verma:

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Health Source Rhode Island's Section 1332 waiver proposal. ACS CAN is making cancer a top priority for public officials and candidates at the federal, state and local levels. ACS CAN empowers advocates across the country to make their voices heard and influence evidence-based public policy change as well as legislative and regulatory solutions that will reduce the cancer burden. As the American Cancer Society's nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN is critical to the fight for a world without cancer.

ACS CAN supports a robust marketplace from which consumers can choose a health plan that best meets their needs. Access to health care coverage is paramount for persons with cancer and survivors. Research from the American Cancer Society has shown that uninsured Americans are less likely to get screened for cancer and thus are more likely to have their cancer diagnosed at an advanced stage when survival is less likely and the cost of care more expensive.¹ In the United States, more than 1.7 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer this year – an estimated 6,540 in Rhode Island.² An additional 15.5 million Americans are living with a history of cancer – 67,900 in Rhode Island.³ For these Americans access to affordable health insurance is a matter of life or death.

ACS CAN supports Rhode Island's proposed reinsurance program. A well-designed reinsurance program can help to lower premiums and mitigate plan risk associated with high-cost enrollees. We note that the Health Source Rhode Island (HSRI) estimates the reinsurance program will

¹ E Ward et al, "Association of Insurance with Cancer Care Utilization and Outcomes, *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians* 58:1 (Jan./Feb. 2008), <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/news/report-links-health-insurance-status-with-cancer-care>.

² American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures: 2019*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, 2019.

³ American Cancer Society. *Cancer Treatment & Survivorship Facts & Figures 2019-2021*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, 2019.

reduce premiums by 5.9 percent in plan year 2020 and 6.3 percent in 2021.⁴ These savings could reduce federal subsidy payments, and lower premiums for consumers not eligible for subsidies who enroll in coverage through the exchange.

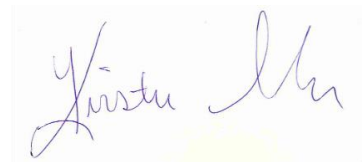
A reinsurance program may encourage insurance carriers to continue offering plans through the exchange or begin to offer plans. The expected maintenance or increase in plan competition due to the reinsurance program also may help to keep premiums from rising. These premium savings could help cancer patients and survivors afford health insurance coverage and may allow some individuals to enroll who previously could not afford coverage. HSRI estimates that enrollment in the individual market will increase by 0.9 percent in 2020 because of the reinsurance program.⁵

We are pleased that the application states that the waiver “will not impact the comprehensiveness of coverage in Rhode Island, except insofar as individuals with coverage have more comprehensive coverage than those without.”⁶ ACS CAN believes that patient protections in current law – like the prohibition on pre-existing condition exclusions, prohibition on lifetime and annual limits, and Essential Health Benefits requirements – are crucial to making the healthcare system work for cancer patients and survivors.

Conclusion

On behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed section 1332 waiver, which we believe will provide long-term viability of the individual market while not eroding important consumer protections. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jennifer Singleterry, Senior Policy Analyst at Jennifer.Singleterry@cancer.org or 202-585-3233.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Sloan
Vice President, Public Policy
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

⁴ Health Source Rhode Island. Rhode Island’s 1332 Waiver Application. July 8, 2019.
https://healthsourceri.com/wp-content/uploads/190708_FinalApplicationPackage.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.