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Multi-Stakeholder Coalition Applauds United States Senate for Helping Chronically Ill

Washington, DC – Earlier today, Senators John Thune (R-SD) and Tom Carper (D-DE) introduced the *Chronic Disease Management Act of 2021*, bipartisan legislation that would remove barriers to high-value chronic disease prevention. The bill would allow employers and health plans to offer more drugs and services that manage chronic conditions on a pre-deductible basis in health plans that are coupled with Health Savings Accounts. The Smarter Health Care Coalition, representing patient groups, employers, providers, health plans, public-sector purchasers, and life science companies strongly supports this important legislation to ensure that individuals with chronic illnesses have robust access to needed care.

“Employers have shown they will utilize flexibility to offer more high-value benefits pre-deductible – that’s because it makes sense to remove barriers for patients with diabetes or asthma or heart disease to get the drugs and services they need to stay healthy,” said Katy Spangler, co-director of [the Smarter Health Care Coalition](https://www.smarterhc.org). The Kaiser Family Foundation published [survey results](#) showing 48% of very large employers say they changed the services or products individuals with chronic conditions could receive before meeting their deductibles after 2019 changes in federal rules for which the Coalition advocated. ***“As the nation continues to recover from the public health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, common-sense, bipartisan bills like this one will become even more important for patients and the health care system.”***

Approximately six in ten Americans have at least one chronic condition and millions struggle to receive the appropriate care due to onerous cost burdens. Studies show that chronic conditions account for \$0.90 of every dollar spent on health care and, without appropriate management, lead to adverse effects on quality of life. Many middle-class and low-income Americans are currently enrolled in HSA-HDHPs and they could greatly benefit from this new flexibility. Furthermore, chronic disease management and the prevention of further complications is an essential component of a comprehensive COVID-19 recovery for medically vulnerable populations.

The *Chronic Disease Management Act of 2021* addresses these problems by allowing plans coupled with Health Savings Accounts to provide plan members access to health care services and medications that manage chronic conditions on a pre-deductible basis. Doing so will yield an enormous benefit to patients,

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The Smarter Health Care Coalition represents a broad-based and diverse group of health care innovators, including consumer groups, employer groups, provider-related organizations, health plans, trade associations, academia centers and professors, foundations, and life science companies. Our goal is to leverage our combined perspectives and experiences to achieve smarter health care that improves the patient experience, particularly through integrating benefit design innovations and consumer/patient engagement within broader delivery system reform in order to better align coverage, quality, and value-based payment goals.

employers, and payers alike, including improved health, enhanced workplace productivity, and the avoidance of unnecessary emergency care visits and hospitalizations. This common-sense reform will benefit patients and will ensure a more rational and sustainable health care system. The legislation also codifies the criteria outlined by the Treasury Department in its 2019 International Revenue Service Guidance ([Notice 2019-45](#)).

“We applaud the leadership of Senators Thune and Carper in authoring this critical legislation to help Americans get more out of every health care dollar we spend,” said Andrew MacPherson, Co-Director of the Smarter Health Care Coalition.

The Coalition strongly encourages swift passage of this critically important legislation that will help patients with chronic illnesses access high-value health care services and medications that ensure optimal health and well-being.

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