

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 13, 2017

Thomas E. Price, M.D.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Price,

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of Health and Human Services. We look forward to working with you to ensure access to quality, affordable health care for all Americans. We commend your commitment to repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and working with Congress to enact market-driven approaches that put Americans back in control of their health care.

We appreciate President Trump's determination to ease the burden of the ACA through his Administration. The President's January 20, 2017, Executive Order instructing agencies to minimize the harmful impacts of the law and provide states additional flexibility is an admirable first step. As Secretary of HHS, we know that much of this responsibility will fall on your shoulders. One way HHS can protect Americans from the crippling effects of the law is to extend the transitional relief policy for individual and group plans in 35 states. HHS Guidance is needed by mid-February to give states and health plans time to act.

Since the enactment of the ACA, millions of Americans have either lost their health insurance or have seen their premiums skyrocket. We are committed to working with you to ensure this does not continue to happen. In 2013, HHS created a transitional relief policy that would allow individuals and small groups to maintain certain "Grandmothered" insurance plans. In states that opted for transitional relief, Grandmothered plans are individual and small group plans purchased after enactment of the ACA and before October 1, 2013, that were not required to comply with certain ACA reforms. President Obama's Administration permitted transitional relief for these plans to protect millions of Americans from feeling the worst pains of the law.

The transitional relief policy was extended in March 2014 and again in February 2016. The current extension is set to expire at the end of 2017, causing millions of Americans to lose their Grandmothered plans in 2018. HHS should extend the current transitional relief policy indefinitely, which would give states the opportunity to allow individuals and small groups to maintain plans. This would provide stability, especially as plans to repeal and replace the ACA evolve.

We eagerly anticipate working with you to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with sensible solutions that give states more flexibility and Americans more options. However, we recognize that this process will take time, and we implore you to do everything in your power to ensure that these millions of Americans who have been protected from Obamacare do not lose their insurance now. We respectfully request that HHS issue guidance by February 21, 2017, to extend indefinitely the transitional relief policy until Congress and the President are able to repeal and replace the ACA completely.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker



Chuck Grassley

Thad Cochran

Thad Cochran

Marco Rubio

Marco Rubio

Rob Portman

Rob Portman

Mike Crapo

Mike Crapo

Shelley Moore Capito

Shelley Moore Capito

John Hoeven

John Hoeven

Susan M. Collins

Susan M. Collins

Joni K Ernst

Joni K. Ernst

Pat Roberts

Pat Roberts

Jeff Flake

Jeff Flake

Roy Blunt

Roy Blunt

Tom Cotton

Tom Cotton

John Barrasso

John Barrasso

James E. Risch

James E. Risch

Jerry Moran

Jerry Moran

Michael B. Enzi

Michael B. Enzi

James Lankford

James Lankford

Dan Sullivan

Dan Sullivan

John Boozman

John Boozman

Tim Scott

Tim Scott

John Thune

John Thune