

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 30, 2023

Statement Supporting the Protecting Health Care for All Patients Act

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The Protecting Health Care for All Patients Act represents an important step forward to strengthen and extend existing protections against use of the quality-adjusted life year (QALY) and similar metrics to all federal programs. The bill advances recent recommendations of the National Council on Disability and reflects longstanding, bipartisan concern with use of QALY standards in health care policy.

PIPC applauded the Protecting Health Care for All Patients Act and encouraged its swift passage into law. In 2010, the Affordable Care Act barred use of QALYs as a threshold to determine coverage, reimbursement and incentive programs in Medicare. The independent federal agency National Council on Disability recommended the bar be extended to all federal programs in its Health Equity Framework.

PIPC Chairman Tony Coelho stated, “As with the Americans with Disabilities Act, legislation barring QALYs in all federal programs can pass if Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle are determined to work together to get it done. Even in a divided Congress, there are issues such as ending disability discrimination in health care that everyone can agree on. I am grateful that Chair McMorris-Rodgers introduced the bill and is prioritizing its passage.”

Maria Town, President and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities, expressed similar optimism and support, stating, “Ensuring that health care policy decisions are focused on the individual needs of people with disabilities is something everyone can agree on. Over two administrations, Republican and Democratic, the National Council on Disability and disability advocates across the country have called for the bar on using QALYs to make Medicare decisions to be consistent across federal programs and this bill advances that.”

Laura Weidner, Vice President of Government Relations & Advocacy at the Epilepsy Foundation, noted broad support across the patient and disability communities for the policy, stating, “Concerns about QALYs are longstanding in the disability community. We urge swift passage of this legislation to ensure that that this discriminatory tool is not used in our nation’s health care programs.”

Debbie Weir, CEO of Cancer Support Community, stated support for the bill, “The bill is consistent with our efforts to work towards a health care system that is truly centered on the experiences, preferences, and values of cancer patients and their loved ones. Too often, patients are caught in the middle of efforts to reduce health system costs by denying or restricting access to care, shifting the cost of care to patients and their families in the process.”

Patricia Goldsmith, CEO of CancerCare, noted the importance of Congress taking this step, stating, “For too long, cancer patients and their families have fought access barriers based on black-box algorithms that treat us like numbers and not individuals. This bill represents an important step forward in advancing patient-centered decision-making across the care continuum.”