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## **Patient Advocates Applaud Biden Administration for Maintaining Medicare's Six Protected Classes Policy**

Washington D.C. — The Partnership for Part D Access, a broad-based coalition of health care stakeholders including diverse patient advocacy organizations that represent patients who benefit from treatments covered under each of Medicare’s “six protected classes,” commended the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for rejecting a proposal that would have substantially weakened Medicare’s six protected classes policy.

Medicines in the six protected classes treat serious health conditions that impact the most vulnerable beneficiaries — the frail, disabled or those with multiple chronic conditions. For these individuals, many medicines are not interchangeable. Seemingly similar patients often respond differently to the same drug: while one patient may respond well, a similar patient will have a suboptimal response, or worse. Further, drugs in the same class often have different side effects, and patients are sometimes better suited to one particular drug over another. The six protected classes policy gives doctors the ability to prescribe the right drug for the patients in their care.

“Medicare beneficiaries with the most complex, chronic conditions are breathing a sigh of relief,” said **Chuck Ingoglia**, President and CEO of the National Council for Behavioral Health, who serves as **Executive Director of the Partnership for Part D Access**. “The Biden administration’s decision demonstrates the need to maintain the six protected classes policy as an essential patient safeguard in Medicare Part D.”

As detailed in a CMS’ announcement, this decision was “based on stakeholder feedback and other considerations.” Notably, stakeholder feedback on the proposal included the following outreach from bipartisan Members of Congress, diverse patient advocacy groups, and others:

- 67 bipartisan Members of Congress signed a [letter](#) to HHS and CMS urging them to withdraw the proposal;
- several thousand patients from across the country wrote letters to the CMS comment portal;
- over 130 individual patient groups joined a [letter](#) to HHS Secretary-designate Xavier Becerra;
- nine leading pharmacy stakeholder groups penned a [letter](#) to the Acting CMMI Director Amy Bassano;

- the Center for Medicare Advocacy and Medicare Rights Center sent a [letter](#) to Acting HHS Secretary Norris Cochrane; and
- a group of 30 leading HIV groups sent a [letter](#) to HHS Secretary-designate Becerra.

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