Thune, Carper Lead Bipartisan Legislation to Strengthen Chronic Disease Management Effort

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Tom Carper (D-Del.) this week introduced bipartisan legislation to ensure high-deductible health plans (HDHPs) that are used with health savings accounts can cover care related to chronic disease management prior to a beneficiary reaching their plan deductible. The Thune-Carper bill builds off legislation they introduced in June 2019, and it follows the administration’s updated guidance issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury in July 2019.

In addition to Thune and Carper, the bill is cosponsored by Sens. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.), and Tina Smith (D-Minn.).

“The administration’s work this summer was welcome news and makes important progress in helping patients with chronic conditions using HDHPs access high-value medications and services to manage their health,” said Thune. “This bill will ensure that the Department of Treasury’s expansion of what constitutes preventive services exists in law.”

“More than 20 million Americans have a high-deductible health care plan with a health savings account,” said Carper. “This bipartisan bill helps ensure that those individuals, especially patients with chronic conditions, can get better access to the basic care they need without the fear of triggering their deductibles. This bill can help improve health care outcomes and, at the same time, save patients money. It’s a true win-win for patients, and I’m proud to reintroduce this common sense bill with Senator Thune.”

“High-deductible health plans help people avoid the burden of skyrocketing premiums and allows them to take greater ownership of their health care decisions,” said Cramer. “Our legislation builds on the Trump Administration’s work to provide greater health care access by making these plans a viable option for those with chronic conditions.”

“Arizonans living with chronic diseases often face cost barriers in getting the medical care they need,” said McSally. “Our bipartisan bill would allow individuals with high deductible health plans to exercise greater flexibility, more effectively use their plan, and better manage their health at lower costs.”

“Allowing high-deductible health plans to cover more preventative care will save Arizona families thousands of dollars in medical costs every year, making health care more affordable for everyday Arizonans,” said Sinema.
“I’ve heard from so many Minnesotans with diabetes who struggle to afford the life-saving insulin they need to survive,” said Smith. “This bill would help lower costs for people with diabetes and other chronic diseases who have high-deductible health plans. I’m glad it has bipartisan support, and I will push to get it over the finish line.”

In July 2019, the IRS issued a notice expanding its interpretation of what constitutes preventive care to include certain items and services that are prescribed to someone with certain chronic conditions. Those items or services can be considered preventive when they are prescribed to an individual with certain chronic conditions and if they are low-cost and prevent the worsening of a chronic condition or the development of a secondary condition. The notice also contains a list of specific items and services that meet the new criteria for preventive care for chronic conditions, not to include other items at this time.

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