

Empower Patients – More Information for Smarter Health Care Choices

Support H.R. 1427, The Truth in Healthcare Marketing Act of 2013

ISSUE

Despite protracted and continuing debate over health reform in the United States, there remains a heightened need to make sure that patients have adequate information to make wise and cost-conscious health care choices and decisions. Put simply, consumers of health care services want, need and require added information about their care and the persons providing it. Advocates of transparency argue that accurate information empowers patients with an improved understanding of the health care delivery system. Currently, there is little “transparency” associated with the most fundamental and important component of health care delivery – the many health professionals who interface with patients each day.

Patients lack information about the wide variety of individuals who work in health care settings, and they are confused by the increasing ambiguity of health care provider-related advertisements, marketing and degree titles. Because of this lack of information, patient autonomy and decision-making have been compromised. To ensure patient empowerment and prudent expenditure of health care dollars, Congress should act to enhance information flow to patients and address the lack of clarity in health care provider advertisements, marketing and self-identification.

H.R. 1427, the “Truth in Healthcare Marketing Act,” introduced by Reps. Larry Bucshon, M.D. (R-IN) and David Scott (D-GA) would improve transparency in the identification of health care providers and in health care provider-related advertisements and marketing.

PROBLEM

- Recent studies confirm increasing patient confusion regarding the many types of health care providers – including physicians, technicians, nurses, physician assistants and other allied providers - engaged in providing services in health care settings. All of these providers play an important and distinct role in the health care delivery system.
- Ambiguous provider nomenclature and related advertisements and marketing are exacerbating patient uncertainty.
- Patient autonomy and decision-making are compromised by uncertainty and misunderstanding in the health care patient-provider relationship.

CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST

- Please cosponsor and pass H.R. 1427 and introduce Senate companion legislation that would strengthen patient autonomy and decision-making with accurate information about health care providers and enhance clarity in health care provider-related advertisements and marketing.
- The “Truth in Healthcare Marketing Act” would provide much needed clarification to address patient confusion in the health care marketplace. The legislation would provide enhanced transparency requirements regarding medical care without adding to the cost of health care delivery and, in fact, should save money.

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