



NATIONAL HEALTH COUNCIL

NEWS

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Statement by NHC President Myrl Weinberg on CMS' Public Comment Period for Draft Medicare Formulary and Transition Guidelines

'Seven Days Does Not Cut It'

WASHINGTON, March 6 — Following is a statement by [National Health Council](#) (NHC) President Myrl Weinberg regarding the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) public comment period for its 2007 Medicare prescription drug draft formulary and transition guidelines that were released to the public after regular business hours on February 23 with a deadline of 5 p.m. on Monday, March 6:

"If CMS genuinely seeks meaningful feedback on its 2007 formulary and transition guidelines, it should provide a realistic timeframe for the voluntary health community to digest these 137 pages and respond in a thoughtful manner. Given the problems CMS encountered with the launch of the program — especially related to the dual eligibles — it makes sense to provide ample time for comments on any proposed changes to the program. Seven business days simply does not cut it."

"We urge CMS to extend the comment deadline to Friday, March 24, to allow people with chronic conditions and disabilities, and those who represent them, a minimum 30-day review period of these crucial guidelines and to ensure the agency receives the quality feedback necessary to best serve patients and their families. To do otherwise is a disservice to the millions who depend on Medicare for their prescription drug needs — and to CMS itself."

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The National Health Council is a private, nonprofit organization of 115 national health-related organizations working to bring quality health care to all people. Its core membership includes more than 50 of the nation's leading voluntary health agencies representing approximately 100 million people with chronic diseases and/or disabilities. Other Council members include professional and membership associations, nonprofit organizations with an interest in health, and major pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. The Council serves as a place for diverse health-related groups to build consensus with a focus on patients and their needs.

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