

Gary Charles Martin, Jr
8/31/2023

Katie Merritt
Director of Policy and Planning

Subject: Comment on Proposed Commonwealth Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plan – 53 Pa.B. 4072

Dear Katie Merritt,

I am writing to express my concerns and provide comments on the proposed Commonwealth Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plan. As a concerned citizen and community leader, I advise against including abortion pills, contraception, and procedures and services related to gender transition.

Mandating such coverage goes against the moral and religious beliefs of many Pennsylvania employers who would then be complicit in what they believe would harm others and violate their religious beliefs. The government should avoid forcing persons to violate their core moral and religious convictions

Secondly, the gender transition pharmaceuticals in reference, could lead to many future complications in an individual's health both physically and emotionally, which already have been scientifically documented. Again, such pharmaceuticals should not be forced (regulated).

Furthermore, determining essential health benefits should never be imposed through regulation but should go through the legislative process. Similar attempts to do the same at the Federal level (i.e. Hobby Lobby) have already been overturned, further emphasizing that the proposed PA state Essential Health Benefits for certain pharmaceuticals being regulated should not occur at the State level. I also add that if such pharmaceuticals would pass legislatively, there should be exemptions for those whose moral and religious beliefs would be violated.

I strongly urge the Department to avoid these items as part of the Proposed Commonwealth Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plan – 53 Pa.B. 4072 in order to address the concerns outlined.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concerns and suggestions regarding the proposed Commonwealth Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plan – 53 Pa.B. 4072.

I kindly request that my comments be taken into careful consideration during the rulemaking process. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require further clarification regarding my comments.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary Charles Martin Jr