



October 20, 2011

Donald M. Berwick, MD, MPP  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
Attention: CMS-9975-P  
Department of Health and Human Services  
P.O. Box 8010  
Baltimore, MD 21244-8010

**Re: Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Standards Related to Reinsurance, Risk Corridors and Risk Adjustment (CMS-9975-P)**  
Submitted electronically to <http://www.regulations.gov>

Dear Dr. Berwick:

The Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP) is pleased to submit comments on selected provisions of the July 15, 2011 proposed rule on “Standards Related to Reinsurance, Risk Corridors and Risk Adjustment.”

ACHP is a national leadership organization representing community-based and regional health plans and provider organizations that collectively provide health care and coverage for more than 16 million Americans, predominantly in the individual and small and mid-sized group markets. ACHP members have a significant presence in the Medicare Advantage market and many also contract with their states to provide coverage to Medicaid beneficiaries. Our members are not-for-profit health plans or subsidiaries of not-for-profit health systems. Member plans share longstanding commitments to their communities, close partnerships with providers, and substantial investments in the innovative approaches and infrastructure necessary to provide health care that is coordinated, affordable and high quality.

### **Subpart B – State Notice of Insurance Benefits and Payment Parameters**

HHS proposes a process by which the states that are operating an exchange or establishing a reinsurance program issue an annual notice to disseminate information about specific requirements to support payment-related functions. It may also serve to address updates to other exchange-related provisions proposed elsewhere that affect payment and benefit design.

ACHP supports a process by which health plans and other stakeholders receive payment-related information that is clear, reliable and complete as soon as possible prior to the relevant plan year, in order to reduce uncertainties and allow plans to respond appropriately. A process of draft (“advance”) notices with opportunity for public comment should precede publication of a final notice. For 2014 especially, such information should be provided as soon as possible so that plans

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can prepare their products and rates for the newly regulated and organized insurance market that is required under the Affordable Care Act.

**Establishment of state insurance benefits and payment parameters (§153.100); Standards for state notice §153.110)**

HHS proposes that states operating exchanges as well as states establishing a reinsurance program issue an annual notice to describe the specific parameters that the state will employ if it intends to utilize any reinsurance or risk adjustment parameters that differ from those specified in a forthcoming annual federal notice of benefit and payment parameters. The state notice would be due no later than March in the calendar year before the effective date. The preamble also proposes a timetable for the federal notice process. If a state fails to provide public notice of its intent to have state-specific parameters, the parameters set forth in the annual federal notice would serve as the state parameters.

For 2014, payment and other information related to the exchanges, reinsurance and risk adjustment programs (as well as risk corridor contributions and payments), be they administered by the states or the federal government on behalf of states, need to be in place as soon as possible. States (or HHS) and issuers will need to test and conduct dry runs in 2013 so that they are ready implement in January 2014. In addition, issuers need to prepare rate filings for January 2014 no later than July 2013. The earlier that HHS and the states can provide the baseline information needed for these programs, the better it will be for assuring that the affected markets transition smoothly into 2014.

With those concerns in mind, ACHP urges that the final rule on the risk mitigation provisions be issued as soon as possible and that the date for the first federal advance notice be moved up to reduce the uncertainties faced by states and issuers.

**Subpart C- State Standards for the Transitional Reinsurance Program for the Individual Market**

**Definitions (§153.200); Collection of reinsurance contribution funds (§153.220)**

Although the transitional reinsurance program is state-based, the ACA sets the contribution levels for the program on a national basis. HHS has proposed that the contribution levels be determined based on a national uniform contribution rate (as opposed to a state-level allocation). HHS further proposes that the national contribution rate be a percent of total premium, based on earned premium. For self-insured plans, the contribution rate would be determined based on the plan's "total medical expenses."

In the preamble, HHS proposes that "percent of total premium" be defined as the percent of total revenue, based on "earned premiums" as described in §158.130(a) (relating to Medical Loss Ratios), in all fully-insured markets (inside and outside of the exchange); it would be based on the percent of total medical expenses in a self-insured market. ACHP supports the decision to calculate a national contribution rate and base it on a percent of premiums. However, basing the contribution rate for self-insured plans on their total medical expenses would create an unlevel playing field because it would include administrative costs in the calculation for insured plans, but not for self-insured plans. The requirement should be revised so that self-insured plans are assessed on the same

basis as insured plans. We urge that the language in the rule be amended to clarify that “...for ERISA-preempted, self-insured issuers, the assessment base shall include administrative expenses that relate to the provision of medical expenses.”

ACHP also seeks clarification about how the contributions will be assessed for issuers that have members in multiple states. We are concerned about the potential administrative burden on issuers with a small number of members in two or more states. To reduce administrative burden, we believe that the most efficient and workable policy would be for HHS to require states to adopt a *de minimus* standard for collection of funds from applicable insurers that have a very small number of enrollees in a given state.

Finally, ACHP encourages HHS to provide more detailed information on how the collections will work with respect to self-insured employer plans and third party administrators (TPAs) with a presence in multiple states.

In §153.230, HHS proposes rules for determining the basis on which reinsurance payments are made and on how such payments are calculated. The Department has concluded that reinsurance-eligible individuals should be identified based on medical costs to an issuer for covered benefits, and not on the basis of specific high-cost conditions; the approach is similar to a traditional reinsurance model with an attachment point and coinsurance. Unlike traditional reinsurance, however, HHS proposes that there also be a cap set at the threshold level for commercial reinsurance. HHS further proposes that the coverage on which the payment policy is determined be based on items and services within the essential health benefits package for an individual enrollee that exceeds the attachment point.

ACHP supports the decision of HHS to adopt a more traditional model due to the time-limited nature of the reinsurance program and the difficulties in obtaining the data necessary to implement a condition-based approach. In designing the final specifications for the federal reinsurance parameters, however, ACHP urges HHS to provide for an accommodation of integrated systems that do not use claims. For them, reinsurance should be provided on the basis of medical services provided.

ACHP also supports HHS’ decision to base reinsurance payments on the essential health benefits and not on something more (or less) generous, but with one important modification. We agree that basing reinsurance payments on a different definition of services might produce too much variability and thus unpredictability. However, given that insurers may still be subject to state benefit mandates, we recommend that the rule provide that reinsurance payments be calculated on the basis of the essential health benefits package plus any state mandates.

### **Calculation of Reinsurance Payments (§153.230)**

In the proposed rule, HHS states that the reinsurance payment formula and state-specific values for the attachment point, reinsurance cap, and coinsurance rate would be announced in the forthcoming annual federal notice. The preamble, however, notes that the ACA does not suggest that the transitional reinsurance program replace commercial reinsurance or internal risk mitigation strategies and that a continued need will exist for ongoing commercial reinsurance. Therefore, HHS

proposes establishing a reinsurance cap set at the attachment point of traditional reinsurance and seeks comment on this approach.

HHS notes in the rule that states must ensure that the reinsurance payment represents the product of the coinsurance rate times all health insurance issuer costs for an individual's essential health benefits which the issuer incurs between the attachment point and the reinsurance cap. The rule recognizes that, since states may have unique situations, a state could establish its own payment formula by varying the attachment point, coinsurance rate, and reinsurance cap.

ACHP appreciates the flexibility given to the states to establish their own payment formulas. We suggest that the temporary reinsurance program is an opportunity to address the truly catastrophic cases that lead to adverse selection and market disruption. For example, care for members with hemophilia can cost up to one million dollars per month. Since commercial and some state reinsurance programs address high cost cases, we suggest that the temporary reinsurance program address the catastrophic cases by making the attachment point above the commercial levels with no cap. If there is appropriate stop loss for catastrophic cases, we would support removing the patients with catastrophic conditions from the calculations for risk adjustment as long as the temporary reinsurance program exists. This would then leave high cost members in the risk adjustment calculation, but not in the reinsurance program.

#### **Disbursement of Reinsurance Payments (§153.240)**

HHS proposes that states ensure that the applicable reinsurance entity collects from issuers of reinsurance-eligible plans the data required to calculate payments, according to the data requirements and data collection specified by the state in its annual notice (or HHS, in the federal annual notice). Comment is invited on suggested timetables for data submissions and for claims for reinsurance payments.

ACHP appreciates that HHS recognizes the importance of correct sequencing given the interactions among the risk adjustment, risk corridor and reinsurance provisions. With respect to the specific timeframe for collections from issuers, TPAs and fully self-insured employer health plans, ACHP supports a requirement that collections be monthly. Payments to eligible insurers should then be paid out quarterly. We support the proposed six-month standard for insurers to submit a claim for a given reinsurance benefit year.

On a technical point, ACHP also believes it important that the final rule on reinsurance provide guidance to the states on how to account for costs that exceed the reinsurance threshold for uninterrupted inpatient hospitalizations that occur at the end of the plan year, overlapping into the next year.

Finally, to ensure the integrity of the program, the state reinsurance entity should be responsible for auditing payment amounts to ensure that they are appropriate.

#### **Subpart D. State Standards Related to the Risk Adjustment Program**

Section 1343 of the ACA provides for a program of risk adjustment for all non-grandfathered plans in the individual and small group markets, both in and outside of the exchange. The Secretary, in

consultation with the states, is required to establish criteria and methods to be used by the states in determining the actuarial risk of plans within a state. States electing to operate an exchange, or HHS on behalf of states not electing to operate an exchange, will assess charges to plans that experience lower than average actuarial risk and use them to make payments to plans that have higher than average actuarial risk. The federal standards in the proposed rule would provide states with discretion to make a number of decisions within those standards.

ACHP suggests a number of principles to guide implementation of the ACA's risk adjustment provisions. These principles are based on an overarching view that the ACA's insurance reforms and exchange provisions need to be implemented to achieve the broadest possible pooling of risks and as level a playing field as possible among issuers. These measures are critical to reduce the reliance on the risk adjustment system, unlikely by itself to mitigate adverse selection to the extent needed. Similarly, the risk adjustment system should be designed with the objective of encouraging health plans to coordinate care and improve the health outcomes of their members. Plans that excel in this regard should not be penalized by having to pay competitors that fail to achieve such indicators of high quality care. More specifically, we believe that:

- Risk adjustment should improve markets and promote competition based on quality, service and price.
- If regulations result in a difference between expected cost for a population and the ability of carriers and plans to match rate with costs, adjustments should seek to bridge that gap.
- Data informing adjustments should be verifiable and adjustments should not be subject to manipulation.
- Adjustments should strike a balance between accuracy and ease of administration and explanation. They should be based on information expected to be readily available on a timely basis.
- Funding should be guaranteed and timely.
- The methodology should incorporate adjustments for the different, generally more severe, risk profile of individuals served by Essential Community Providers.
- The risk adjustment system will need to account for differences in state insurance rules, such as the differences in rating rules and benefit requirements that will remain even after the ACA's federal minimum requirements for the individual and small group insurance markets take effect.
- Requirements on health plans and the sequencing of the different risk assessment measures need to be communicated well in advance of implementation in 2014.

ACHP recognizes that implementation of the risk adjustment system will need to be carried out in stages. As noted in the preamble of the proposed rule, comprehensive health status information for the newly insured population is unlikely to be available in most states in 2014 when the insurance reforms, exchanges and risk adjustment are scheduled to begin. Moreover, the risk profile of the newly insured population is likely to be sufficiently different from that of both the Medicare population and the commercially insured population, thus necessitating modifications to existing risk assessment tools. For example, while ACHP encourages HHS to adopt the current Medicare Advantage risk assessment tool (the CMS-HCC model) as the starting point for the federal risk adjustment model, modifications will be needed to account for diagnoses for maternity-related care and acute high-cost conditions that are not adequately reflected in the CMS-HCC model.

We appreciate that the limited timetable available to HHS, the states, and health plans to implement risk adjustment constrains implementation of a model that meets all of the above principles by 2014. Accordingly, ACHP recommends that HHS work toward a federal risk adjustment methodology that moves toward realizations of these principles but is also guided by what is practicable. As we discuss below, the sooner the details of this methodology are provided, the better plans will be able to prepare their products for 2014. In this regard, ACHP recommends that:

- HHS begin with a federal methodology and associated data standards based on a realistic assessment of what health plans, the states, and the exchanges can be asked to do in preparation for the 2014 plan year.
- With the experience from the 2014 plan year, HHS should then make additional refinement of diagnoses and add other risk assessment elements as needed. For example, the addition of new information about health status will likely reduce the explanatory value (weight) of the age and sex variables in the model.

The general direction that HHS has taken to risk adjustment, as developed in the proposed rule, is largely consistent with our vision for federal and state responsibilities in implementing the ACA's risk adjustment provisions. Given the diversity of state insurance markets and different experiences of plans with Medicaid and commercial risk adjustment systems, we appreciate that HHS has proposed giving flexibility to the states to adopt alternatives to a federal methodology so long as the state's methodology meets specified federal criteria.

ACHP's concerns about specific aspects of the risk adjustment proposal follow:

### **Risk adjustment administration (§153.310)**

Under the proposed rule, a state may elect an entity other than the exchange to operate a state risk adjustment program if the entity meets the eligibility criteria for exchanges proposed in §155.110 of the notice of proposed rulemaking entitled, "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Establishment of exchanges and Qualified Health Plans."

ACHP believes that the entity administering the risk adjustment program should not be the exchange but should instead be an independent entity with a governing board that must meet strict prohibitions on conflicts of interest. Since the exchanges are designed to administer the competition among Qualified Health Plans (QHPs), they are not positioned to be the most neutral party to redistribute funds across the entire individual and small group markets, especially if the exchange is also given the authority to selectively contract for QHPs offered in the exchange. In addition, the proposed rules would require that the voting members of an exchange governing board "represent consumer interests by ensuring that membership may not consist of a majority of representatives of health insurance issuers, agents, or brokers, or any other individual licensed to sell health insurance." While we support the ability of states to appoint representatives of health plans to the exchange governing board, we do not believe that these individuals should be responsible for redistribution of funds across companies that are in competition with one another. HHS should require or at least encourage states to establish an independent risk adjustment entity that would be exclusively dedicated to administering the state's risk adjustment program.

### **Federally-certified risk adjustment methodology (§153.320)**

Section 1343(b) of the ACA requires HHS to establish criteria and methods for risk adjustment in coordination with the states. HHS proposes to establish a baseline federal methodology; states can seek certification of alternate methodologies that meet federal criteria. The preamble proposes that a state's alternate methodology would have to offer similar or better performance in that state than the federally-certified risk adjustment methodology as determined based on the criteria in §153.330.

ACHP applauds the decision by HHS to provide for a federal methodology but with flexibility for the states to adopt alternatives so long as they meet the federal criteria. We comment on those criteria below (see §153.330). A number of issues are identified in the preamble related to design decisions for the federal methodology for which comment is solicited.

In the preamble's discussion of the federal risk adjustment methodology, HHS seeks comments on ways to account for the allowed variation in rating so that risk adjustment does not adjust for the actuarial risk that issuers are allowed to incorporate into their premium rates. Comment also is invited on approaches to the federal risk adjustment methodology.

*Determining plan actuarial values.* ACHP is concerned about whether and how risk adjustment will be applied to account for the adverse selection that is likely to be experienced by the higher actuarial level packages of essential health benefits. Under the ACA, insurers will be required to offer essential health benefits of varying actuarial value, ranging from a high deductible catastrophic plan for certain populations to an essential benefits package meeting an actuarial value of 90 percent (platinum). Within the exchanges, insurers will have to offer at least the silver and gold packages, with 70 percent and 80 percent actuarial values, respectively. Outside the exchanges, however, insurers will be able to offer any of the actuarial levels of essential benefits. The likely result is that higher-value plans selling in the exchange will attract a disproportionate share of higher-cost members, potentially driving up premiums for those plans.

Further fueling adverse selection for exchange plans is the provision in the law that will increase the actuarial value of the essential benefit packages for subsidy-eligible individuals. For example, for those individuals with income below 250 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), the cost-sharing requirements for silver level plans will be reduced, thereby increasing the actuarial value above 70 percent; for those with incomes below 400 percent of the federal poverty level, the maximum out-of-pocket limit will be reduced below the level established for a high deductible health plan (HDHP) that can include a Health Savings Account (HSA).

In light of these design features and their potential effects on risk segmentation, it is critical to maintaining viable exchanges that the risk adjustment system be designed to adjust for differences in membership across the different levels of benefit packages offered by insurers, both in and outside of the exchanges. Specifically, ACHP recommends that:

- Variations in the actuarial value of the essential benefit packages that are permitted to be sold in and outside of the exchanges should be reflected in the determination of relative risk of plan membership. The adjustment weights should first be applied to each benefit package within an insurer's overall block of business, and then summed up to the insurer level for an

aggregate risk score across all tiers. In addition, the risk adjustment system should account for 100 percent of the benefit package and not just the part that is incurred by the plan.

- Designing risk adjustment in this way will enable insurers to know the relative risk profiles of their members in the different levels of benefit packages and price their policies knowing that selection bias will be accounted for in the reallocation of dollars carried out under the risk adjustment system.

We are concerned about the potential for higher tiers to be priced out of the market. Although not specifically a risk adjustment issue, one approach may be to place limits on the allowed price variation within the different tiers. Another suggestion is that plans be required to offer at least one plan in each benefit tier. We recognize that the statute only requires that plans offer silver and gold packages within the exchange, but states may have more leeway to require QHPs to offer all of the levels both inside and outside of the exchange, particularly if they are selectively contracting with QHPs.

*Risk adjustment during the transitional period (2014-2016).* In implementing risk adjustment, a state (or HHS on behalf of a state) should take into account the effects of reinsurance collections and payments on insurers selling in the individual market. When the reinsurance program is operating, it will have the effect of bringing down the payments made through risk adjustment.

*Reconciling payments.* HHS anticipates the potential for inequalities between risk adjustment charges and payments. To adjust gross calculations when gross plan payments are greater than gross plan charges, HHS identifies three options and invites comment on them.

In the event that charges are insufficient to equal payments for a given year, ACHP favors decreasing payments on a prorated basis so that the resulting amount equals plan charges. In the event that an imbalance results in more monies being available for payment than needed, ACHP prefers the option of placing the excess amounts in a reserve account to be used in the event of a shortfall in funds for risk adjustment payments in the following year. However, ACHP does not support a policy that assumes the need to build up a surplus on an ongoing basis. In other words, the calculation of payments should not be routinely determined on an assumption that charges should be sufficient to produce a surplus.

*Publication of methodology in notices (§153.320(b)).* The proposed rule provides that each methodology (federal or state alternative) would have to include: (1) a complete description of the risk adjustment model, including the factors to be employed in the model, the qualifying criteria for establishing that an individual is eligible for a specific factor, weights assigned to each factor, and the schedule for collection of risk adjustment data and determination of factors; and (2) any adjustments made to the risk adjustment model weights to determine average actuarial risk. We strongly encourage HHS to include the proviso for state alternatives that appears in the preamble – that they have to offer similar or better performance in that state than the federally-certified risk adjustment methodology – in the body of the rule itself.

### **State Alternative Risk Adjustment Methodologies (§153.330)**

States seeking to utilize alternate risk adjustment methodologies would be required to submit their proposed alternate methodologies for HHS review and certification. The state would have to provide information about: (1) the specific risk pools to which the methodology would apply; (2) a full description of the risk adjustment model; and (3) any adjustment made to the base risk adjustment model weights to determine average actuarial risk.

As discussed under §153.320, ACHP supports giving states flexibility to adopt alternatives to the federal risk adjustment methodology so long as they offer similar or better performance than the federally-certified risk adjustment methodology as determined using criteria enumerated in this part of the rule. ACHP also urges HHS to require that the state, in proposing an alternative methodology, show how it intends to move after the first year from a fully retrospective model to one that is a combination of prospective and retrospective risk adjustment – as we also support for the federal methodology. ACHP believes that such a hybrid approach will suit the commercial market better than one that is solely prospective, like the Medicare Advantage CMS-HCC model. The Medicare model is unlikely to be sufficiently robust to account for the high level of turnover among coverage options or the types of health conditions, such as maternity and certain high-cost acute episodes, that are more characteristic of the under-65 population. Accordingly, retrospective risk assessment should also be done. Methodologically, this would entail a separate relative risk assessment at the end of each plan year that accounts for each plan's actual enrollment and diagnoses, with appropriate adjustments to the plans made by the risk adjustment authority. States that have the capability to incorporate prospective risk adjustment as of 2014 should be permitted to do so if they can demonstrate that their methodology meets the federal criteria specified in this section. HHS should also evaluate whether there are states that have sufficiently robust capability to collect risk data that they can move immediately to full-scale diagnosis-based, prospective risk adjustment.

HHS proposes specific criteria for certification of a state alternative in the proposed rule. An alternative methodology must: (1) accurately explain cost variation within a given population; (2) choose risk factors that are clinically meaningful to providers; (3) encourage favorable behavior and discourage unfavorable behavior; (4) use data that are complete, high in quality and available in a timely fashion; (5) provide stable risk scores over time and across plans; and (6) minimize administrative burden. ACHP supports these criteria but urges HHS to add three requirements. First, a state must describe how it plans to move from a concurrent or retrospective risk adjustment system to a risk adjustment system that combines prospective and retrospective adjustment, and where relative actuarial risk is measured based on diagnosis and not utilization. (As we stated above, a state that proposes a prospective methodology for 2014 should be permitted to implement such an approach so long as it can demonstrate that it meets the criteria specified above.) Second, the state should be required to describe what steps it is taking to minimize the risk adjustment system's susceptibility to gaming. Third, as an additional phrase in item 4 above, the data informing risk adjustments should be verifiable and not subject to manipulation.

### **Data collection under risk adjustment (§153.340)**

HHS proposes that a state, or HHS on behalf of the state, collect the data for use in determining individual risk scores needed for the risk adjustment process. Issuers would submit raw claims data sets to the state government, or the entity responsible for administering the risk adjustment process at the state level, and that entity would compute each plan's risk score relative to all other plans.

ACHP strongly prefers this proposed “intermediate approach” to the “distributive approach” described by HHS in which each issuer would reformat its own data to map correctly to the risk assessment database and then pass on self-determined individual risk scores and plan averages to the state risk adjustment entity. A third (i.e., “centralized”) approach outlined in the preamble has certain virtues in terms of being able to build on existing data transaction platforms used for the MA and Part D programs, but given the potential diversity of state risk adjustment methodologies, we do not think that a centralized approach is administratively feasible.

In implementing the intermediate approach, we urge HHS to leverage the data submission structures for Medicare Advantage risk adjustment to the greatest extent possible in order to reduce administrative burden on plans and entities administering risk adjustment.

As HHS notes, protection of the privacy of individually identifiable information is critical. ACHP supports the proposal that the transaction of risk adjustment data be done consistent with HIPAA administrative simplification and security standards (as specified in the proposed rule), and that states be required to establish privacy standards that set forth approved uses and disclosures of individually identifiable information.

Under §153.340 of the proposed rule, states with all-payer claims databases that are operational on or before January 1, 2013 may request an exception from the rule's data collection minimum standards by submitting technical specifications for the all-payer claims database, including data formats, and meeting certain other requirements. ACHP supports this exception.

### **Subpart F – Health Insurance Issuer Standards Related to the Temporary Risk Corridors Program**

#### **153.500 Definitions**

HHS proposes that risk corridor contributions or payments be determined based on a QHP's allowable costs. “Allowable costs” would be defined as “an amount equal to the total medical costs, which include clinical costs, excluding allowable administrative costs, paid by the QHP issuer in providing benefits covered by the QHP.” HHS proposes to define “allowable administrative costs” as the “total non-medical costs defined in §158.160(b) (non-claims costs other than taxes and regulatory fees), including costs for the administration and operation of the health insurance issuer.” Comment is invited on whether HHS should consider costs for activities that improve health care quality as described in §158.150 and §158.151 (relating to the Medical Loss Ratio standards) for allowable costs to be consistent with the ACA's MLR policy.

ACHP supports a modification to the proposed rule that allowable costs include (1) activities that improve quality as described in §158.150 and (2) expenditures related to Health Information

Technology and meaningful use requirements in §158.151. Given the interaction of the risk corridors with the Medical Loss Ratio reporting and rebate requirements, it is important that definitions be consistent and that the risk corridor requirements more generally not provide incentives to issuers to use risk corridor payments to pay for MLR rebates. Also, while not the subject of this proposed rule, it may be appropriate for HHS to extend the deadline for MLR reporting so that risk corridor payments may be incorporated. HHS should consider concluding and reporting the MLR determination to plans by March of the prior year.

*Timeframes for risk corridor data submission.* HHS indicates that it has considered timeframes for QHP issuers to remit charges for risk corridor payments within 30 days of receiving notice from HHS. In addition, HHS would make payments to QHP issuers that are owed risk corridor amounts from HHS within a 30-day period after HHS determines that a payment should be made. ACHP believes that these are reasonable timeframes.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia P. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia Smith  
President and CEO