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Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals

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Submitter Information

Name: Anonymous Anonymous

Address:

New York, NY, 10025

Email: dr.herukhuti@gmail.com

General Comment

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services gathering demographic data from all applicants and non-applicants as part of the enrollment process for Marketplace, Medicaid, or CHIP coverage. As a bisexual person of color who lives with asthma, I believe it is vital for the applications to collect data on demographic factors associated with disparities in access to health coverage and care. These factors include race, ethnicity, disability, primary language, sex (including gender identity), and sexual orientation.

The bisexual population faces lower rates of health insurance coverage than our lesbian, gay, and straight counterparts. Transgender people, including bisexual transgender people, face even lower rates.

Collecting data related to sex (including gender identity) and sexual orientation is crucial to better understanding and addressing these disparities.

The Center for American Progress has submitted comments regarding existing models for data collection that are appropriate for the application process. Please see their comments for specific recommendations on proposed questions.

Adding these questions to the applications is both feasible and realistic. As part of the process of updating the federal applications, I strongly urge CMS to also explicitly clarify that state-based Marketplaces may update their applications to improve the sex question as described above and to add an optional sexual orientation question in the section of the application that includes the optional race and ethnicity demographic questions.

I have experienced a doctor at a municipal clinic who took an incomplete sexual history from me when providing sexual health care because they assumed I was heterosexual. I continue to experience medical professionals who are not aware of the health inequities I face as a Black bisexual man. Collecting and providing more accurate data can help in the education of medical professionals.

Thank you so much for your consideration of this important issue.