

5 Things You Need to Know about the Health Care Refusal Rule

For decades, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has funded a variety of programs designed to serve the health care needs of poor and low-income individuals. In stark contrast to this longstanding public health mission, the Trump administration finalized a health care refusal rule in May 2019 that jeopardizes the ability of health centers to protect patient needs and care. Here are five things to know about the rule:

1. Prioritizes the religious and moral beliefs of individual health center staff over the health care needs of patients.

2. Restricts employers from even asking if candidates are willing to perform all of the core responsibilities of a job.

3. Blocks employers from creating reasonable accommodations that balance religious beliefs and patient health and safety, and instead gives the objecting employee total veto power over measures designed to ensure patients can continue to receive care.

4. Invites individuals and health agencies to opt out of federal requirements and program standards for care.

5. And for state and local health agencies, the rule undermines nationally recognized clinical standards by limiting their ability to create provider networks that provide nondirective options counseling.

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