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National Center
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November 6, 2017

Thomas L. Holloway
Executive Vice President, Missouri State Medical Association

Jonathan Heidt, M.D.
President, Missouri College of Emergency Physicians

Brian Bowles
Executive Director, Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons

Herb B. Kuhn
President and CEO, Missouri Hospital Association

Dear Mr. Holloway; Dr. Heidt; Mr. Bowles; and Mr. Kuhn:

On behalf of the American Heart Association, I want to thank you for your recent letter regarding Anthem's policy change for emergency room visits in Missouri. We share the concerns you outlined in your letter. The very real unintended consequence of such a policy is to discourage their policyholders from immediately seeking or altogether foregoing potentially life-saving care when time is of the essence.

As an organization we have invested a significant amount of time, energy and resources in educating the public on the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and stroke. For decades, we have also reinforced the importance of calling 911 and seeking immediate medical attention. This policy is particularly disturbing and could threaten to erode the tremendous progress we have made in improving the chain of survival. If a patient believes they are experiencing a medical emergency, they need to seek care as quickly as possible without concern for whether their symptoms might be subsequently deemed "non-emergent." We know that to hesitate even a few moments can have fatal consequences.

Our policy staff have been monitoring Anthem's steps to enact such policies in Missouri, New York, Kentucky, Georgia, and Indiana with publicly reported plans to expand to at least 14 additional states. We are also closely monitoring legislation and state Medicaid waivers that could similarly undermine our efforts to remove barriers to individuals seeking medical attention.

*"Building healthier lives,
free of cardiovascular
diseases and stroke."*

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Please remember the American Heart Association in your will.



I want to thank you for your efforts in Missouri to bring attention to this issue and reassure you that the American Heart Association shares your concerns and the urgency to reinforce and support a “prudent layperson” standard in all such policies.

I am copying Mark Schoeberl, our Executive Vice President for Advocacy and Health Quality, with the request that he follow up to connect you with our staff that are working on this issue nationally and in Missouri.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy A Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "N".

Nancy Brown
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association

cc:

John Warner, M.D., AHA President
James Postl, AHA Chairman of the Board
Ivor Benjamin, M.D., AHA President-elect
Bertram Scott, AHA Chairman-elect
Rose Marie Robertson, M.D., FAHA, AHA Chief Science and Medical Officer
Eduardo Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H., FAAFP, AHA Chief Medical Officer for
Prevention and Chief of the Center for Health Metrics and Evaluation
Mark Schoeberl, AHA Executive Vice President, Advocacy and Health Quality

