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SCHAKOWSKY UNVEILS NEW INTERACTIVE PAGE ON WEB SITE TO COMBAT HMO ABUSES AND BUILD SUPPORT FOR THE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS PAGE ENCOURAGES CONSTITUENTS TO EMAIL "HMO HORROR STORIES" TO SCHAKOWSKY

WASHINGTON, D.C. Calling on her constituents to help her end HMO abuses, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today unveiled a new interactive page on her web site that will allow her constituents to share their "HMO horror stories" with her. Schakowsky plans to use these stories while speaking on the House floor and during news conferences to show her colleagues that there is an urgent need to pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights.

On her new interactive page, Schakowsky invites her constituents to email her their experiences with HMOs and to sign a petition calling on Congress to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights, HR 358.

"I know that in the 9th District, many of you have fought battles with your HMOs and more often than not, you lost. If you believe that it is time to stop HMO abuses, the time to act is now. Email me your HMO horror story. Let me know if you have been denied care, forced to change your doctor in the middle of treatment, lost coverage, refused access to a specialist or had to work for days to get what you deserved. Together we can convince Congress to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights," Schakowsky wrote.

Schakowsky also joined her Democratic colleagues today in signing a discharge petition to bring HR 358 to the House floor for immediate consideration.

Schakowsky said that in Congress there are many bills that claim to offer reform. Instead, these bills are designed to help the HMOs continue to make record profits, while cutting care, increasing costs, and limiting services.

"The millions of HMO patients will not be fooled by phony proposals that do nothing but keep the status quo. We need to pass real reform, and HR 358, the Patients' Bill of Rights, is the answer," Schakowsky said.

HR 358 would set quality standards for HMOs and other insurers, ensure that medical professionals make health care decisions and not the HMO bureaucrats, and guarantee that HMOs will be held accountable for their decisions in a court of law.