



October 15, 2019

Dear Missouri Congressional Delegation,

As Congress works to close out 2019, we share your focus on ensuring patients have access to affordable medications. There are no shortage of health care proposals being discussed and while we are encouraged some would provide meaningful financial support and transparency, others risk severely altering one of the most successful government programs – Medicare Part D – which provides more than 1.2 million Missourians (2018 data from Kaiser Family Foundation) and Medicare Part B - access to a wide variety of prescription medicines.

First, we support efforts to streamline the drug supply chain by providing rebates directly to patients at the pharmacy counter. Sharing rebates directly with patients would provide financial relief to those who need it most and could help with higher adherence levels. Second, we believe capping out of pocket costs for Medicare Part D beneficiaries and lowering what they pay throughout the year would be a step in the right direction to help patients better plan and budget for their medical costs throughout the year again helping maintain access and adherence.

However, there are also proposals being discussed that we think miss the mark and puts at risk access, adherence and the environment to discover the cure for Alzheimer's, cancer and other diseases. One would introduce an international price index (IPI) into the Part B system, which currently reimburses physician offices for injectable medications. Comparing the prices paid in foreign countries is simply comparing apples to oranges. Not only do many of these countries have government run healthcare systems but many don't provide access to the latest FDA approved medications meaning patients are forced to wait months, if not years, to access a medication that is available to patients in the U.S. today.

There is even talk of altering the Part D and Part B programs by introducing an inflation penalty. If enacted, this statutory price protection would defy the current market-based structure of Part D, which has made the program so successful. Not only has spending come in well below CBO projections but premiums are also nearly 50% of original projections. A recent survey from Medicare Today showed 88 percent of respondents said their drug plan is delivering what it promised. Please remind your colleagues not to fix what isn't broken.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. Patients deserve access to medications and care in their local communities. Please keep those considerations front and center as Congress looks to address the cost of prescription medications.

Sincerely,

American Stroke Foundation

Associated Industries of Missouri

BioNexus KC

Empower: Abilities

Missouri Biotechnology Association