

April 11, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone,

The Patient Access to Pharmacists' Care Coalition (PAPCC) is a multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary initiative whose mission is to develop and help enact a federal policy proposal that would enable patient access to, and payment for, Medicare Part B services by state-licensed pharmacists in medically-underserved communities. Membership is comprised of organizations representing patients, pharmacists, and pharmacies, as well as other interested stakeholders.

We write today to express support and gratitude for your efforts to address the opioid epidemic. We are committed to working with Congress and other health professionals and stakeholders to identify ways pharmacists can help curb opioid abuse and misuse and positively impact treatment. We believe that by more fully engaging pharmacists on the health care team presents a unique opportunity to improve outcomes for Medicare patients and reduce challenges, including those related to opioids. Pharmacists play a unique role in patients' care as they are the medication experts, and with 89% of Americans living within five miles of a community pharmacy, frequently the health care professional that a patient will see the most.

While pharmacists are known for dispensing prescription medications and helping patients use them safely, today's pharmacists are trained and licensed to provide a number of additional services needed by many Medicare beneficiaries. As part of the health care team, pharmacists can play an important role in helping to address opioid misuse and abuse as well as treatment. For example, because pharmacists see the patient's complete medication profile, they can help bridge any communication gap that may exist among providers by coordinating and providing medication-related services. This is particularly important for patients living with chronic conditions who have medications from multiple providers. Additionally:

- Pharmacists are involved in pain management programs that include medication tapering services and transitioning to non-opioid treatments, work in medication assisted treatment programs and furnish naloxone where authorized. Depending on state authority, pharmacists working under collaborative practice agreements can initiate, monitor, modify, and discontinue medication therapy, including opioids.
- Pharmacists working with other providers, improve care coordination and delivery, resulting in better health outcomes for Medicare patients. As the medication use experts, pharmacists can help prescribers determine the optimal drug for the indication, determine duration, appropriate quantities to dispense in the outpatient settings, and oversee the plan through transitions of care.
- Given the prevalence of this problem in communities across the country, pharmacists, who are already in these communities, can help provide better management and monitoring services to fill the gap in access to care.

As stated earlier, pharmacists are the medication experts on the patient's health care team and the most accessible health care practitioner. Accordingly, it is of the utmost importance that Medicare patients are able to access pharmacists' services, which can help prevent prescription drug misuse and abuse, in addition to improve treatment outcomes. Authorizing pharmacist clinical services in the Medicare Part B benefit would expand beneficiaries' access to care including medication and pain management services and treatment.

Scores of your colleagues have cosponsored the *Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act* (H.R. 592) that would provide medically underserved beneficiaries with access to Medicare Part B services by pharmacists, consistent with state scope of practice law. We appreciate the Committee's attention to H.R. 592 and look forward to working with you on its passage as an important way to help the address the opioid crisis.

Thank you, again, for your leadership in addressing the opioid epidemic. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to better utilize pharmacists to help Medicare beneficiaries access the care they need to positively impact this serious problem facing our nation. Should you have any questions, please contact Vince Ventimiglia or David Lee at Leavitt Partners ((202) 774-1404).

Sincerely,

The Patient Access to Pharmacists' Care Coalition (www.pharmacistscare.org)

List of Organizations

Albertsons Companies

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Pharmacists Association

American Society of Consultant Pharmacists

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

AmerisourceBergen

Brookshire Brothers

Cardinal Health

CVS Health

Healthcare Leadership Council

International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists

National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations

National Association of Chain Drug Stores

National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc

National Community Pharmacists Association

National Consumers League

Omnicell

Rite Aid

The Kroger Co.

Thrifty White Pharmacy

USP

Walgreens

Walmart