

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As you develop legislation to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on America's health care infrastructure, we urge you to remember that America's pharmacists are among the nation's most accessible healthcare professionals and essential front line health care providers providing medication access and patient management as individuals shelter in place.

As healthcare providers who serve the critical medication needs of patients, including immunocompromised patients who face extreme health risks at this unprecedented time, the pharmacy community is under immense strain to collaborate with health care practitioners and ensure there is no disruption to patient medication access. To support our pharmacies and the patients they serve, **we urge you to remove the reimbursement barriers that threaten pharmacy financial stability and a pharmacy's ability to fully and effectively support patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also urge you to support patients by implementing immediate cost sharing relief. Specifically, we ask that you address these concerns simultaneously by reforming pharmacy direct and indirect remuneration (DIR) "clawback" fees.**

Our pharmacies are under immense pressure to ensure medication access is not disrupted, particularly as patients shelter in place. We are working to ensure patients with chronic and complex diseases, including those with specialty conditions that put them at greatest risk to coronavirus have the medication access and pharmacy support services they need. Protecting patient medication access is critical for their health and wellbeing and protects them from avoidable emergency room visits, especially while our medical system is at maximum capacity.

Pharmacy DIR reform is critically important at this time, as current pharmacy-related DIR fees significantly raise Medicare beneficiary out-of-pocket costs and are a main driver of increased beneficiary cost sharing at the point-of-sale, threatening medication adherence. Pharmacies must remain viable, and their infrastructure remain intact to support patient medication access and medication management throughout this public health emergency.

Please protect pharmacies and their patients by enacting important DIR reforms included in S. 2543 (as introduced by Senate Finance Committee leadership as a revised draft on December 6, 2019), the *Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act*. These reforms eliminate retroactive pharmacy DIR fees, ensuring drug costs reflect all discounts on a drug, reducing seniors' drug costs at the point-of-sale as well as establish pharmacy quality measures which would improve quality of care and help insure pharmacy viability. These provisions have enjoyed strong bipartisan support in both the House and

Senate. We ask for these reforms to be enacted as soon as possible, or at a minimum Congress issue a temporary delay of the pharmacy DIR clawback fees to alleviate financial pressure on pharmacies and their patients at this time.

We hope that members of Congress will not overlook the critical need to ensure the sustainability of pharmacies during this public health emergency, while immediately lowering prescription drug costs for seniors.

Sincerely,

American Pharmacists Association
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Association of Specialty Pharmacy
National Community Pharmacists Association

cc: The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Senate Finance Committee Chairman
The Honorable Ron Wyden, Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member
The Honorable Frank Pallone, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman
The Honorable Greg Walden, House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member