Chairman Hatch, Chairman Upton, Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Wyden, Ranking Member Pallone, and Ranking Member Levin,

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 improve the delivery of services in underserved communities. The Senate Finance Committee, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and the House Ways and Means Committee have spent significant time in the 114th Congress focused on expanding access to care in medically underserved communities and for those with chronic needs. Pharmacists offer unique skills and benefits that can help assist the health care team provide needed care, coordination, medication management, and other health care services that can improve outcomes for patients with chronic conditions at a value to Medicare.

As you know, individuals in underserved areas often struggle to access providers because of their geographic isolation or provider shortages in specific locales. Pharmacists can – and do – play important roles in working with physicians and other providers to help these patients access important services.

While pharmacists are best known for their commitment to 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 addressing many of the areas your committees have focused on, including:
• Reforms to Medicare’s current fee-for-service program that incentivize providers to coordinate care for patients living in underserved communities;
• Strategies to increase care coordination in urban and rural areas;
• Options for empowering Medicare patients to play a greater role in managing their health and meaningfully engaging with their health care providers; and
• Ways to more effectively utilize primary care providers and care coordination teams in order to meet the goal of maximizing health care outcomes for Medicare patients.

By utilizing pharmacists in the Medicare Part B benefit, you can expand access to care in urban, and rural areas, incentivize providers to coordinate care with pharmacists, empower seniors to access health care services at the local level, and encourage coordination teams that include pharmacists.

Scores of your colleagues have cosponsored the Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act (S. 314/H.R. 592) that would provide medical underserved beneficiaries with access to Medicare Part B services by pharmacists, consistent with state scope of practice law. We strongly encourage you to consider advancing S. 314/H.R. 592 in your respective committees.

Thank you, again, for your leadership in addressing the health care needs of underserved communities. We look forward to working with you to ensure that all Medicare beneficiaries have access to the care they need, specifically through pharmacist-provided care. Should you have any questions, please contact Vince Ventimiglia or David Lee at Leavitt Partners ((202) 774-1404).

Sincerely,

Albertson’s LLC and New Albertson’s Inc.
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Pharmacists Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
AmerisourceBergen
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
BI-LO Pharmacy
Brookshire Brothers
Cardinal Health
CVS Health
Food Marketing Institute
Fruth Pharmacy
Healthcare Distribution Alliance
Healthcare Leadership Council
Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association
International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists
Kroger
League of United Latin American Citizens
McKesson
National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Center for Farmworker Health
National Community Pharmacists Association
National Consumers League
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Pharmaceutical Association
National Rural Health Association
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