

April 9, 2018

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

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

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone,

The National Community Pharmacists Association (“NCPA”) urges members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee to consider H.R. 592, the Pharmacy & Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act to allow pharmacists to provide services under Medicare Part B and empower them to assist in the fight against the opioid epidemic that is plaguing underserved communities all across America.

NCPA represents the interests of America’s community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 22,000 independent community pharmacies. Together, they represent an \$80 billion health care marketplace and employ more than 250,000 individuals on a full or part-time basis. By volume, 52 percent of the total prescriptions our members fill is covered by Medicaid or Medicare Part D.

NCPA believes that pharmacists can be more fully engaged as front-line healthcare professionals to improve outcomes for Medicare patients. Pharmacists are the most trusted health care profession and are usually the health care professional that patients will see most since 89% of Americans living within five miles of a community pharmacy.

Pharmacists can play a greater role in the delivery of healthcare services. Pharmacists who practice at the fullest extent of their education, training, and license can provide services that include health and wellness screenings, chronic disease management, immunization administration, medication management, and working in and partnering with hospitals and health systems to advance health and wellness and reduce hospital readmissions. Enabling pharmacists to fully utilize their education, training and expertise, and be more integrated into the patient’s health care team will also improve health outcomes and greatly benefit specific populations. Pharmacists can provide an number of services to Medicare patients that could help to address opioid misuse and abuse as well as treatment, and they can also coordinate and provide medication-related services including helping patients with chronic conditions manage their medications from multiple providers.

NCPA and its partners in the pharmacy community, the Patient Access to Pharmacists' Care Coalition, thank you for your leadership and stand ready to assist the committee in its vital work to address the opioid epidemic that is ravaging our nation. We look forward to working with the committee on this matter and to employ pharmacists to help tackle this crisis and more fully serve Medicare beneficiaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karry K. La Violette", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Karry K. La Violette
Vice President, Government Affairs and Advocacy
National Community Pharmacists Association