

August 3, 2015

The Honorable Pat Toomey
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Kaine
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Toomey, Portman, Brown and Kaine:

We, the undersigned organizations representing research and policy organizations, healthcare plan sponsors, and managed care pharmacists, applaud you for introducing S. 1913, Stopping Medication Abuse and Protecting Seniors Act of 2015, which would help prevent prescription drug abuse by permitting the use of drug-management programs in Medicare that require patients at risk of drug abuse to utilize designated pharmacies and prescribers to obtain controlled substances at risk for abuse.

These drug management programs, which are also known as Patient Review and Restriction programs (PRRs), are a critical tool for addressing the nation's prescription drug abuse epidemic. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expert panel evaluation found that PRRs used in state Medicaid programs have reduced narcotic prescriptions, abuse, and visits to multiple doctors and emergency rooms, while also generating cost savings.¹ These programs are used in state Medicaid as well as in commercial plans, but authorization is needed by Congress to permit the use of PRRs in Medicare. The legislation would authorize the use of PRRs in Medicare, potentially improving continuity of care by providing improved drug therapy management while simultaneously ensuring patients with legitimate medical needs continue to have access to effective pain control.

There is support to advance these drug management programs as an effective tool to decrease opioid abuse. The policy has been proposed in the FY 2016 Budget request for the Department of Health and Human Services, and the House of Representatives authorized these programs in the 21st Century Cures Act, which passed with broad bipartisan support on July 10, 2015. We urge the Senate to join in efforts to address the Nation's ongoing prescription drug abuse epidemic by advancing Stopping Medication Abuse and Protecting Seniors Act of 2015 to authorize the use of PRRs in Medicare.

We thank you for your work to advance this important public health policy and look forward to working with you as the process moves forward to ensure the final legislation brings the proven benefits of PRRs to Medicare beneficiaries. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lindsey Berman at the Pew Charitable Trusts at lberman@pewtrusts.org or (202) 540-6958.

Sincerely,

National Coalition On Health Care
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy
Alliance of Community Health Plans
Pharmaceutical Care Management Association

Anthem, Inc.
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
CVS Health
Express Scripts, Inc.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Patient review & restriction programs. Lessons learned from state Medicaid programs (2012). Available at http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/pdf/PDO_patient_review_meeting-a.pdf