

December 11, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate Majority Leader Reid:

The pharmacy profession, as represented by the organizations listed below, is pleased that the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (H.R. 3590) recognizes the importance of providing patients and prescribers with the tools necessary to optimize appropriate medication use, reduce medication-related problems, and improve health outcomes through the delivery of medication therapy management services, health promotion, disease prevention and chronic care management activities.

Proper use of medications helps improve quality of life and health outcomes. However, under the current system, we incur more than \$177 billion annually in mostly avoidable health care costs to treat adverse events from inappropriate medication use.^[i] The proper use of medication becomes even more important as treatment of chronic disease costs the health care system \$1.3 trillion annually, or about 75 cents of every health care dollar.^[ii] A 2006 Institute of Medicine report requested by the Senate Finance Committee estimated "that there are at least 1.5 million preventable ADEs [adverse drug events] that occur in the United States each year. The true number may be much higher."^[iii] Clearly, more must be done to address this crisis.

With this in mind, we would like to highlight the following sections that are vital to optimize appropriate medication use, reduce medication-related problems, and improve overall health outcomes. We urge you to retain these important provisions as you work to pass this historic legislation.

MTM Grant Programs (Section 3503)

The pharmacy profession welcomes the inclusion of stand-alone grant program that tests pharmacist-provided MTM services as defined by the pharmacy profession's Core Elements of an MTM Program.^[iv] The program ensures testing of delivery care models, such as patient-centered self-management programs, that improve patient outcomes through team-based collaboration between prescribers and pharmacists.

Integrated Care Models (Sections 2703; 2704; 2706; 3021; 3022; 3023; 3024; 3502)

We applaud the Senate's inclusion of provisions to ensure that providers with expertise in pharmacotherapy, including pharmacists, are fully engaged in integrated, collaborative, team based approaches to delivering care including medical homes, accountable care organizations, community health teams, and home-based chronic care programs.

Given the nearly universal role of medications in the care of patients with both chronic and acute disease it is essential that that medication therapy management services are

integrated into efforts to improve care coordination, reduce preventable hospital readmissions, and improve medication reconciliation at transitions of care.

Transitional Care Activities (Sections 3025; 3026; 3201)

The legislation also recognizes the significant gaps in quality of care coordination and communication when patients are transferred from one setting of care to another. Problems arising from inappropriate medication use are a primary reason for hospital readmissions and pharmacists - helping to manage medication as part of a transitional care team - can play a major role in preventing these events. Transitional care activities might include medication reconciliation, medication records, and discharge planning that may include medication therapy management services.

Medicare Advantage Plan Incentives (Section 3201)

We support providing bonus payments to Medicare Advantage plans that conduct care coordination and management activities. In particular, we are pleased that the Mark acknowledges the need for medication therapy management programs to address medication use issues such as poly-pharmacy through medication reconciliation, periodic reviews of drug regimens, and integration of medical and pharmacy care for chronically ill, high-cost beneficiaries.

Conclusion

Our nation's pharmacists play a critical role in providing affordable, accessible and quality health care. Decisions made to reform our health care system should enhance, fully recognize and utilize the professional skills and competencies of pharmacists.

We are encouraged by the Senate's recognition of the importance of medication therapy management services and recommend strengthening these provisions to ensure that providers with expertise in pharmacotherapy, including pharmacists, are fully engaged in programs to improve medication use in this country.

Our organizations, representing pharmacists and pharmacies in all practice settings, look forward to continuing to work with the Congress to enact health reform. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss questions you may have regarding any of these provisions. Should you wish to do so, please contact John Coster, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for the National Community Pharmacists Association at (703) 888-0859 or john.coster@ncpanet.org or Kristina Lunner, Vice President of Government Affairs for the American Pharmacists Association at (202) 429-7507 or klunner@aphanet.org.

Sincerely,

Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American Pharmacists Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

College of Psychiatric & Neurologic Pharmacists
Food Marketing Institute
International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists
National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Community Pharmacists Association
Rite Aid Corporation
Safety Net Hospitals for Pharmaceutical Access
Walgreen Co.

[\[i\]](#) Ernst FR, Grizzle AJ. Drug-related morbidity and mortality: updating the cost-of-illness model. J Am Pharm Assoc. 2001;41:192-9

[\[ii\]](#) "An Unhealthy America: The Economic Burden of Chronic Disease," Milken Institute, Oct. 2, 2007

[\[iii\]](#) Preventing Medication Errors: July 2006, Institute of Medicine

[\[iv\]](#) American Pharmacists Association; National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation. Medication therapy management in pharmacy practice: core elements of an MTM service model (version 2.0). J Am Pharm Assoc. 2008;48:341-53.