



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHAIN DRUG STORES

Statement
Of
The National Association of Chain Drug Stores
For
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Health

Hearing on:
“21st Century Cures Bill”

April 30, 2015
10:00 a.m.
2123 Rayburn House Office Building

National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS)
1776 Wilson Blvd, Suite 200
Arlington, VA 22209
703-549-3001
www.nacds.org

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) thanks Chairman Pitts, Ranking Member Green, and members of the Subcommittee on Health for the opportunity to share our perspectives the 21st Century Cures Bill. NACDS represents traditional drug stores and supermarkets and mass merchants with pharmacies. Chains operate more than 40,000 pharmacies, and NACDS' 125 chain member companies include regional chains, with a minimum of four stores, and national companies. Chains employ more than 3.8 million individuals, including 175,000 pharmacists. They fill over 2.7 billion prescriptions yearly, and help patients use medicines correctly and safely, while offering innovative services that improve patient health and healthcare affordability. NACDS members also include more than 800 supplier partners and nearly 40 international members representing 13 countries. For more information, visit www.NACDS.org.

NACDS supports the mission of the 21st Century Cures Initiative to accelerate the discovery, development and delivery process of new drug treatments for patients. As the face of neighborhood healthcare, retail pharmacies can play an important role in the delivery of new lifesaving drug treatments that result from the 21st Century Cures Initiative. NACDS member pharmacies play a leading role in expanding patient access to care and treatment, which positions our members to be key players in dispensing new drugs, as well as providing new services that include emerging cures. Within the context of the 21st Century Cures Initiative, community pharmacy's value is amplified through the growing efforts of the industry to provide health education and disease state testing and management. Through personal interactions with patients and face-to-face consultations, pharmacies are helping to shape the healthcare delivery system of tomorrow, in partnership with doctors, nurses and others. We look forward to working with the Subcommittee in developing policy and legislative ideas to ensure the success of the 21st Century Cures Initiative. We offer the following comments for your consideration.

Section 3151, “Establishing a PDP Safety Program to Prevent Fraud and Abuse in Medicare Prescription Drug Plans

NACDS urges a deliberative and thoughtful approach to implementing policies restricting access to prescription medications. While we share the legislation’s goal of combatting prescription drug abuse and diversion, we also believe that any potential programs must ensure legitimate beneficiary access to needed medications is not impeded. Policies to reduce overutilization must be balanced with maintaining access to prescription medications by the beneficiaries who need them most. Protections should be in place to allow a pharmacy, in consultation with the prescriber, to fill legitimate prescriptions without needlessly delaying treatment for beneficiaries.

NACDS believes access can be maintained by ensuring patients have the ability to select one or more pharmacies that best meet their needs. In selecting their pharmacy, beneficiaries should have the option to select a location, or number of locations under common ownership that electronically share a real time, online database, which are licensed by the respective State Board(s) of Pharmacy to dispense prescription drugs to a beneficiary. This will allow a beneficiary to obtain their medications from a number of locations for a particular pharmacy, so long as that pharmacy uses a common database that would ensure medications are not inappropriately dispensed. Similarly, processes must be in place to ensure that beneficiaries can quickly change their selection when they move. We believe these beneficiary protections would reduce barriers to access while maintaining the integrity of safe pharmacy networks.

Conclusion

NACDS thanks the Subcommittee for consideration of our perspectives on the 21st Century Cures Bill. We appreciate the opportunity to work members of Congress, as well as other policymakers, to promote the health and welfare of our patients and all Americans.