

December 4, 2017

The Honorable Greg Walden
The Honorable Frank Pallone
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Walden and Pallone:

First, thank you for your efforts to advance legislation to reform the OTC drug monograph system, the system which regulates the clear majority of OTC medicines Americans use for their everyday healthcare needs. I know that the provision regarding two years of exclusivity for sponsor order requests supported by original human data studies has been widely discussed, and I write in support of that provision at that length.

I have 33 years of retail experience in store operation, inventory management, and merchandising, including nine years at Walgreens, where I was responsible for the merchandising and marketing of all non-pharmacy related product for over 7000 stores. I currently advise clients to help optimize their go-to-market strategies with America's major retailers. In both of these roles, I have direct, first-hand experience on the need to begin planning with retailers two or more years ahead of a new product launch, and the speed with which retailers begin their private label or store brand planning and strategy in parallel. Similarly, I have direct experience in the annual planning cycles retailers undertake to decide how to organize and set their shelves for the upcoming year (i.e., planograms). The length of this work at retail easily eats into any exclusivity period a manufacturer would gain with a new innovation to a monograph. Without an incentive to develop and market new innovations, and without an opportunity for manufacturers to gain consumer recognition and drive repeat purchase, I fear that manufacturers will be less aggressive in developing innovations that can benefit the health of American families.

I hope you will support the two-year exclusivity provision in the OTC monograph reform legislation.

Sincerely,

David A. Van Howe

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