



April 6, 2017

Congressman Greg Walden
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
237 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Joe Barton
Vice Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Walden and members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee,

The Iowa Pharmacy Association (IPA) was established in 1885 and represents over 2,500 pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, student pharmacists, and pharmacy owners. The mission of IPA is to empower the profession of pharmacy to improve health outcomes. Across the state, pharmacists and pharmacies are located in all of Iowa's 99 counties.

IPA greatly appreciates the efforts of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in spearheading the fight to address the opioid crisis. With one committee hearing remaining on opioids that will focus on Medicare and Medicaid, we would like to bring to the attention of the committee H.R. 592 and its potential to help stem this deadly epidemic. H.R. 592, the *Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act*, would provide medically underserved beneficiaries with access to Medicare Part B services by pharmacists, consistent with state scope of practice law. Although H.R. 592 was not included on the agenda for the committee's final hearing, we would like to highlight how patient access to pharmacists' services can help address this crisis.

While pharmacists are known for dispensing prescription medications and helping patients use them safely, today's pharmacists are trained and licensed to provide a number of additional services needed by many Medicare beneficiaries. Currently, these pharmacist services are not covered under Medicare Part B. As a result, beneficiaries' access to the health care practitioner with the most medication-related education and training is limited and restricted mainly to services related to the dispensing of medications. By not including pharmacists among other Part B providers whose services are covered,

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Medicare also makes it more difficult for patients and the other members of their health care team to work with pharmacists as a part of a coordinated, team-based approach to care.

As the medication experts on the patient's health care team, pharmacists play an important role in helping patients manage chronic pain and preventing prescription drug misuse and abuse. Pharmacists are involved in pain management programs that include medication tapering services, work in medication assisted treatment programs, and furnishing naloxone where authorized. Furthermore, 89% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy, making pharmacists the most accessible healthcare professional. Pharmacists can use their medication expertise to better manage pain treatments, including educating patients and families about the safe use of opioids as well as the potential need for and appropriate use of naloxone.

By allowing pharmacists' services to be covered by Medicare Part B through H.R. 592, pharmacists can be better utilized in the fight against the opioid crisis by managing and optimizing the impact of medications, reviewing medications to help prevent overprescribing, tailoring care plans to patient needs, providing recommendations for non-opioid pain management alternatives, and educating patients regarding opioids. Therefore, we strongly urge you to consider H.R. 592 as the House Energy and Commerce Committee considers its options in addressing the opioid crisis. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads 'Kate Gainer'.

Kate Gainer
Executive Vice President, CEO
Iowa Pharmacy Association

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads 'Casey Ficek'.

Casey Ficek, J.D.
Director, Public Affairs
Iowa Pharmacy Association

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