

VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

May 4, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for H.R. 3, *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act*

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Rodgers:

The Center for Medicare Advocacy (the Center) is pleased to support H.R. 3, the *Elijah Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act*. The Center, founded in 1986, is a national, non-partisan education and advocacy organization that works to ensure access to comprehensive Medicare, health equity, and quality health care. We provide education and legal assistance to ensure people receive the Medicare coverage to which they are legally entitled, and the quality health care they need. We draw upon our direct experience with thousands of individuals to educate policy makers about how their decisions affect the lives of real people.

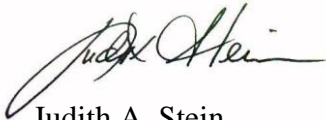
For too long, Americans have carried the burden of excessive prescription drug prices as manufacturers inflate the prices of products sold in the United States, while simultaneously selling the same drugs overseas at significant discounts. Out-of-pocket costs for co-pays and drugs have been rising rapidly and the burden falls particularly hard on low-income people with Medicare. Yet, when Congress created the Part D prescription drug program in Medicare, it prohibited the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) from negotiating drug prices with manufacturers.

Among other things, H.R. 3 would lower drug prices, in part, by establishing a fair price negotiation program and authorizing the Secretary of HHS to negotiate directly with prescription drug manufacturers. Further, the bill would cap out-of-pocket expenses for Part D plan enrollees.

We strongly supported H.R. 3 when it passed the House in 2019, including the reinvestment of those savings back into the Medicare program to expand benefits, including dental, vision and hearing, expand low-income program eligibility, additional Medigap enrollment rights and other

changes.¹ We urge Congress to take the same approach now regarding prescription drug savings and Medicare improvements.

Thank you for your work to make prescription drugs, Medicare, and health care more affordable and accessible. For additional information, please contact David Lipschutz, Senior Policy Attorney, at dlipschutz@MedicareAdvocacy.org; (202)293-5760.



Judith A. Stein
Executive Director/Attorney

¹ See, e.g., Center for Medicare Advocacy Press Release “Medicare Experts Call for Swift Passage of HR3 to Lower Drug Prices and Improve Medicare” (December 9, 2019): <https://medicareadvocacy.org/medicare-experts-call-for-swift-passage-of-hr3-to-lower-drug-prices-and-improve-medicare/>.