

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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June 9, 2017

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden:

We are writing to request that the Committee hold hearings to examine the rising costs of prescription drugs and work in a bipartisan fashion to address this critical issue. Ensuring patient access to affordable and innovative prescription drugs should be of the utmost importance to the Committee, especially as drug prices continue to rise at an alarming rate. As was expressed during the health subcommittee and full committee markups of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Reauthorization Act of 2017, we believe that addressing prescription drug prices should be a top priority of this Committee and we ask that you work with us to find policies that will truly help to lower costs.

We remain concerned by the staggering impact high drug prices have on American families, as well as on overall health spending in the United States each year. Annual drug spending in the U.S. is expected to reach more than \$500 billion by 2018, also resulting in large drug spending increases to Medicare and Medicaid as well.¹ In 2015, growth in prescription drug spending outpaced all other health care services, surpassing hospital care as well as physician and clinical services.²

As a result, many Americans face real barriers to accessing the medications they need. While new life-changing and life-saving therapies continue to enter the market each year, patients must be able to afford these treatments in order to benefit from their potential. This

¹ Observations on Trends in Prescription Drug Spending, U.S. Dep't of Health and Human Services, Office of the Asst. Sect. for Planning and Evaluation, Mar. 8, 2016 (<https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/187586/Drugspending.pdf>).

² National Health Expenditures 2015 Highlights, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (<https://www.cms.gov/research-statistics-data-and-systems/statistics-trends-and-reports/nationalhealthexpenddata/downloads/highlights.pdf>).

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Committee has come together to work on legislation that would bring these life-changing and life-saving therapies to the market sooner, by providing FDA and industry with the new tools to streamline drug development and improve the efficiency of the regulatory process. Our work should not stop there.

We must find workable solutions that will incentivize competition in the pharmaceutical marketplace and encourage the development of affordable and high quality drugs, while also monitoring steep prescription drug price increases when they arise. Pricing patients out of the market, or forcing them to choose between their medications and other necessities, should not be acceptable. The Committee would be well served to hear from expert witnesses who can help to explain the current impediments to lowering prices, and help us formulate consensus driven approaches in order to resolve this issue.


The American people expect us to work together to find answers to this problem. In fact, a recent national poll found that six in ten Americans believe lowering the costs of prescription drugs should be a top priority for the President and Congress.³ Following our bipartisan work on the 21st Century Cures Act, as well our current work together on the FDA user fee reauthorization process, it is our hope that we can advance bipartisan policies to address rising drug costs with the same urgency and determination.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member


Bobby L. Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress
Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

³ Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Health Care Priorities for 2017, Kaiser Family Foundation, Jan. 6, 2017 (<http://kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/kaiser-health-tracking-poll-health-care-priorities-for-2017/>).



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Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health



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Subcommittee on Communications
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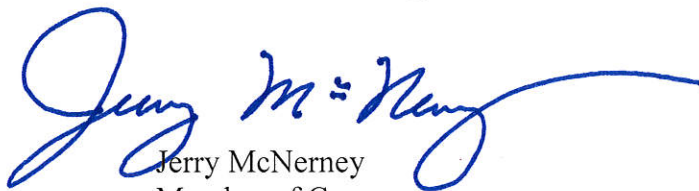
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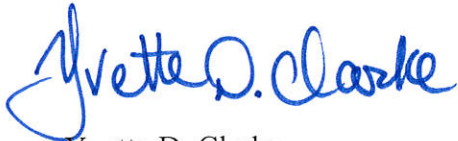
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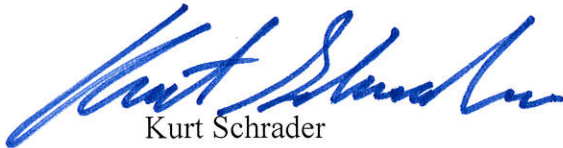
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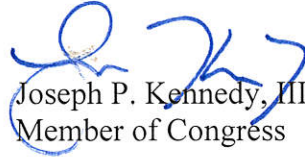
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Dave Loebsack
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