



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

Debra B. Whitman, Chair

August 15, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell

The Honorable Chuck Schumer

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer,

On behalf of the Leadership Council of Aging Organization (LCAO), we are writing to express our concern over Section 207 of the Lower Health Care Costs Act of 2019, which passed out of the Senate HELP Committee. Section 207 removes the long-standing requirement that medicines marketed in the United States adhere to quality standards established by the US Pharmacopeia.

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena. LCAO serves as a source of information about issues affecting older adults and provides leadership and vision as America works to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by our aging society. Our organizations have expertise in health care, economic security, nutrition and food security, housing and other issues facing older adults and people with disabilities. We are committed to advancing public health and promoting access to affordable medicines to keep older adults healthy and improve their well-being and the well-being of their families.

The existing public transparent standards are a compendium of drug information that is produced annually by the United States Pharmacopeia, an independent, not-for-profit and nongovernmental entity. The current standards it develops help ensure consistency in the quality of medicines as mandated by U.S. laws. They reassure doctors, pharmacists and patients that medicines contain the ingredients promised on the label at the promised dosage and purity, and serves as a set of standards internationally for more than 100 other nations. Law enforcement agencies also use these public standards to stop counterfeit or substandard drugs from entering our country and harming patients.

The repeal of the U.S. Pharmacopeia requirement would not increase the number of lower-cost biosimilars available to American patients. It could, instead, deter biosimilars from coming to market as manufacturers of follow-on products use the current system of standards to develop their own products in order to meet the same level of safety and effectiveness. Congress has rejected similar language previously, in 2016.

We urge you to not include this harmful provision in final Senate drug legislation. The lack of public standards could potentially jeopardize the quality of biologic medicines and harm patients, especially older Americans.

Sincerely,
The Undersigned Organizations of LCAO:

AFSCME Retirees (AFSCME)
Aging Life Care Association
Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Federation of Teachers Program on Retirement & Retirees (AFT)
American Geriatrics Society (AGS)
American Postal Workers Union Retirees (APWU)
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)
American Society on Aging (ASA)
Asociación Nacional Pro Personas Mayores (ANPPM) | (National Association of Hispanic Elderly)
Association for Gerontology in Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (AGHDHBCU)
Caring Across Generations
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. (CMA)
ElevatingHOME
Families USA
The Gerontological Society of America (GSA)
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
Justice in Aging
Medicare Rights Center
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Association of State Long-term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP)
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare (NCPSSM)
National Senior Corps Association (NSCA)
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Social Security Works
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER)

cc: Senator Charles Grassley
Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Lindsey Graham
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Lamar Alexander
Senator Patty Murray