**Patient Access to Pharmacists’ Care Coalition (PAPCC)**

**H.R. 592/S. 314**

Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act

Purpose: H.R. 592/S. 314 will enable Medicare beneficiaries access to pharmacist-provided services under Medicare Part B by amending section 1861(s)(2) of the Social Security Act. These services would be reimbursable under Medicare Part B if they are provided in medically underserved communities and consistent with state scope of practice laws.

**Scope**

- **Who** – State-licensed pharmacists with a B.S. Pharm. or Pharm. D. degree.
- **What** – Pharmacists’ services according to state scope of practice laws.
- **Where** – Medically underserved communities (i.e., Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs), Medically Underserved Populations (MUPs), or Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) as designated by the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)).
- **Reimbursement** – Pharmacist services would be reimbursed at 85% of the physician fee schedule, consistent with reimbursement for other non-physician practitioners.

**Background**

Millions of Americans lack adequate access to primary health care, a situation that is expected to get worse as demand increases. Approximately 45% of Americans have at least one chronic condition, and 27% have multiple chronic conditions, rates that are expected to rise.\(^1\)\(^2\) Further, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that an additional 25 million individuals will be gaining health coverage under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA).

In the face of this ongoing provider shortage, pharmacists are conveniently accessible health care professionals who, in collaboration with other health care team providers, are capable of playing a greater role in the delivery of health care services. Pharmacists today are providing a broad spectrum of services, within their scope of practice, including conducting health and wellness testing, managing chronic diseases, performing medication management, administering immunizations, and working in and partnering with hospitals and health systems to advance health and wellness while helping to reduce hospital readmissions.
Access to Pharmacists’ Care
Physicians and certain non-physician health care professionals are reimbursed under Medicare Part B for providing necessary health care services. Pharmacists’ services are not generally reimbursed in this fashion. This lack of reimbursement limits Medicare beneficiaries’ access to health care services and limits the contributions pharmacists can make to patient care. Reimbursing pharmacists for practicing at the top of their education and training while better integrating them into the patient’s health care team will improve health outcomes.

Key aspects of legislation
The bill increases access and improves outcomes by enabling pharmacists to provide patient care services, consistent with their education, training and license. The legislation would not expand the types of services that pharmacists are permitted to provide; eligible services would continue to be governed by state scope of practice laws.

The legislation promotes increased access to care for patients who are medically underserved. The legislation focuses on care for underserved beneficiaries in MUAs, MUPs, and HPSAs. Access to care is currently a significant challenge for these communities. This legislation can help address provider shortages and access issues in these areas.

The bill promotes cost-effective health care by increasing access to, and opportunities for, early intervention at cost-effective settings. Consistent with precedent established in the Social Security Act for nurse practitioners and physician assistants, pharmacists’ services would be reimbursed at 85% of the physician fee schedule, unless they are operating under the direct supervision of a physician.

Request

About Us
The Patient Access to Pharmacists’ Care Coalition’s (PAPCC) mission is to develop and help enact a federal policy proposal that would enable patient access to, and payment for, Medicare Part B services by state-licensed pharmacists in medically underserved communities. Our primary goal is to expand medically-underserved patients’ access to pharmacist services consistent with state scope of practice law. PAPCC consists of over 25 organizations representing patients, pharmacists, pharmacies, and other interested parties.

Contact
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