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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
SELECT REVENUE MEASURES

SUBCOMMITTEE OF
SOCIAL SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HEALTH

The Honorable Fortney Pete Stark
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Ways & Means
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Stark:

I am writing to ask you to consider extending by six months the deadline for small pharmacies to be accredited to continue to provide durable medical equipment (DME) to Medicare beneficiaries.

Without such an extension, many Medicare beneficiaries may have to travel long distances to be able to obtain their necessary DME. I am particularly concerned about the ability of Medicare beneficiaries to obtain diabetes testing supplies, such as test strips. Regular and consistent monitoring of blood glucose is critical for Medicare patients with diabetes to maintain effective blood glucose control. If they lack a way to easily obtain these testing supplies to accurately monitor their glucose levels, Medicare beneficiaries may see a decrease in their health, leading to an increase in health spending to treat complications of diabetes.

I ask that you support an extension for small pharmacies that have already started the accreditation process by October 1, 2009, to be allowed an additional six months to complete the process. This will allow these pharmacies and small businesses to continue to provide important DME supplies and services to Medicare beneficiaries. Some small pharmacies seem to be having difficulty completing the process because of the complexity of the requirements and the lack of personnel at the pharmacy that have time to complete the process. Extending this deadline by six months would help assure that Medicare beneficiaries can continue to access their neighborhood pharmacies to obtain their DME.

I appreciate your consideration of this request, and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lloyd Doggett". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Lloyd Doggett