



July 23, 2009

The Honorable Marion Berry
U.S. House of the Representatives
2305 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran
U.S. House of the Representatives
2202 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Berry and Congressman Moran,

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the nation's leading small business advocacy organization, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 616, the Access to Durable Medical Equipment Act. This important legislation will enable community pharmacists to remain competitive in the selling of durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics and supplies (DMEPOS).

Currently, community pharmacists are the only licensed medical professionals that must meet the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) accreditation requirements as Medicare suppliers of DMEPOS. Last year, CMS exempted a long list of licensed medical professionals from accreditation, except pharmacists. Furthermore, CMS has yet to offer a valid reason why this specific group should not be exempt. H.R. 616 is a necessary step in preserving patient access by requiring that pharmacists are treated equally with all other licensed medical professionals.

Accreditation is both time consuming and costly for community pharmacists. Initial accreditation expenses amount to around \$6,000 – paid upfront – with annual fees of \$500 in following years. Community pharmacists are a trusted source for their customers, and it is reasonable to assume that many will be forced to discontinue DMEPOS offerings due to the burdensome accreditation costs. By requiring pharmacist accreditation, patient access to important services is directly threatened.

Thank you for introducing H.R. 616 and for calling attention to how the mandated pharmacist accreditation impacts small business and overall access to quality healthcare. We look forward to working with you on this issue in the 111th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Eckerly". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Susan Eckerly
Senior Vice President
Public Policy