



Joining the Debate

By Michael F. Conlan

Elsewhere in this issue, there is a special section recounting some of the many highlights of the 111th Annual NCPA Convention and Trade Exposition. One that bears emphasizing occurred during

the second general session when NCPA Executive Vice President and CEO Bruce T. Roberts, RPh, declared Oct. 20, 2009 "Independent Community Pharmacy Action Day."


He asked NCPA members in attendance as well as those not at the New Orleans meeting to contact their lawmakers and urge them to support the association's top priorities in health care reform legislation: fair Medicaid reimbursement, disclosure of now secret PBM rebate deals, equal accreditation treatment for pharmacists by Medicare, and expansion of medication therapy management opportunities.

So there would be no mistake on the impetus for the calls, NCPA ran an advertisement on the morning of the 20th in two widely read Capitol Hill publications, *Congress Daily a.m.* and *The Hill*, announcing that pharmacists were engaged in the health care reform debate.

The results were heartening. More than 1,000 community pharmacists answered our call and took the time from their busy days to contact their representative or their senators.

At left is our ad. 


Michael F. Conlan is editor of *America's Pharmacist*.



"...because of the immense variety and complexity of medications now available...
the pharmacist has become an essential resource
...and thus access to his or her expertise must be possible at all times."
—The Institute of Medicine, *To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System*

Our pharmacist members, who are small-business owners, will be calling you today to support the following provisions in health care reform:

- Medicaid patients' access to community pharmacies through adequate payments to dispense lower-cost generic medications
- Lower drug costs through strong Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) transparency requirements
- Seniors' ability to continue to obtain durable medical equipment, including diabetes testing supplies from community pharmacies
- Patient access to pharmacist-delivered medication therapy management services

 **Neighborhood community pharmacists...the right prescription for health reform!**

NCPA
NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION
www.ncpanet.org
Dispensing nearly half of the nation's retail prescription medicines