May 31, 2012

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
United States House of Representatives  
2421 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers:

On behalf of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), which represents 21,000 diverse individuals and organizations, all of whom share the common bond of an interest in rural health, we thank you for your work on H.R. 4215, the Medicare Pharmacy Transparency and Fair Auditing Act, to address the lack of transparency on the part of the pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) in the Medicare prescription drug program, better known as Medicare Part D.

Rural Americans face a unique combination of factors that create economic, educational, and social disparities that all conspire to impede in their struggle to lead a normal healthy life. The obstacles faced by health care providers and patients in rural areas are vastly different and greater than those in other geographic areas. We know rural independent pharmacies play a critical role, often as the sole health care provider in remote and sparsely populated rural areas.

NRHA believes H.R. 4215 is essential to preserve continued access to rural Americans. There are just slightly over 1,800 independent community pharmacies operating as the only retail pharmacy within their rural community.

Inadequate access to a community pharmacist can reduce medication adherence and by definition, limits the ability of patients to benefit from the health care services provided by community pharmacies. Rural independent pharmacies help improve outcomes for these patients by using their expertise and knowledge to promote the optimal use of drugs while helping to minimize adverse drug effects.

Like many in rural communities, independent pharmacies face many legislative and regulatory proposals that would jeopardize patient access to a pharmacist and your legislation is key to ensuring greater regulations and transparency over the PBM industry.

We thank you for your support on these important issues and greatly appreciate the work you have done on PBM auditing and transparency legislation.

Sincerely,

Alan Morgan  
Chief Executive Officer