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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1003

January 28, 2013

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The Honorable Marilyn Tavenner
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850

Dear Administrator Tavenner,

On March 15, 2013, along with thirty of my colleagues, I sent a letter expressing concerns we had heard from Medicare beneficiaries and the independent pharmacies who serve them back home regarding preferred pharmacy networks in Medicare Part D.

Independent pharmacists in my district and around the country serve so many Medicare patients who consistently depend on the face-to-face counseling and in-person services that they provide. Additionally these small business pharmacies are often located in highly rural and low-income urban areas where some of the larger pharmacies may not exist.

Recently, I have heard from community pharmacy owners in regards to problems they are encountering from being excluded from these preferred networks. These networks were created to increase competition in the marketplace and ultimately save the government money, but the reality is that many small business pharmacies have been excluded from these networks and that has resulted in much strain on their patients and to their bottom-line.

Your agency's recent release of its proposed rule on Part D has some very encouraging language that addresses the points that were made in the above mentioned letter, however, I believe the work is not yet complete and that it is crucial that Congress and the Executive Branch make sure small business pharmacies have the ability to compete on a level playing field with all the entities involved. Thank you for addressing this access to care issue, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Lynn A. Westmoreland
Member of Congress