

AMY KLOBUCHAR
MINNESOTA

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RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 16, 2021

Secretary Xavier Becerra
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Secretary Becerra and Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

I write in support of the Administration's recently-released plan to lower prescription drug prices, including through Medicare negotiation. I look forward to working together to make sure that meaningful negotiation authority is included in the upcoming reconciliation package.

As you know, prescription drugs are outrageously expensive in the United States, and people are struggling to afford the medications they need. Last year, one in three Americans saw their out-of-pocket medication costs increase, and certain brand-name prescription drugs in the United States cost two to four times more than they do in other countries.¹ This has real consequences. Surveys have found that 58 million Americans were unable to afford prescribed drugs at least one time throughout 2019, and that nearly 96 percent of respondents considered lowering drug prices to be an important challenge facing Americans.²

To help bring down the cost of prescription drugs, we must ensure that the reconciliation package includes provisions that allow Medicare to negotiate the prices of prescription drugs directly with pharmaceutical companies. Currently, 46 million seniors are enrolled in the Medicare Part D program, and while the program has helped tens of millions of people access life-saving drugs, more must be done to address the high out-of-pocket costs too many Medicare beneficiaries are facing.

We know that the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs in our country is an urgent problem, and there are solutions on the table to help people access the medications they need at the prices they can afford. By including provisions that give Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices in the reconciliation bill, we can help cut the cost of prescription drugs while

¹ Nguyen, Amanda (March 22, 2021). Survey: Americans Struggle to Afford Medications as COVID-19 Hits Savings and Insurance Coverage. GoodRx. <https://www.goodrx.com/blog/survey-covid-19-effects-on-medication-affordability/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20new%20GoodRx,and%20shelter%20as%20a%20result>; U.S. Government Accountability Office (April 28, 2021). Prescription Drugs: U.S. Prices for Selected Brand Drugs Were Higher on Average than Prices in Australia, Canada, and France. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-282>.

² Witters, Dan (November 12, 2019). Millions in U.S. Lost Someone Who Couldn't Afford Treatment. Gallup. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/268094/millions-lost-someone-couldn-afford-treatment.aspx>; Morning Consult (January 2021). Rx Drug Affordability. The Campaign for Sustainable Rx Pricing. https://www.csrpx.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CSRXP-Memo-Final.pdf?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=49f8e9848b-dc_diagnosis_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-49f8e9848b-151588873.

increasing access to life-saving medications. This idea has broad support: According to recent polls, nearly 90 percent of Americans support allowing the federal government to negotiate for lower drug prices.³

We have the opportunity to act on these solutions now, and I look forward to working together to ensure that provisions that give Medicare the authority to negotiate drug prices are included in the reconciliation package.

Thank you for your continued support on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Klobuchar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Klobuchar".

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

³ Hamel, Liz et al. (June 15, 2021). Public Opinion on Prescription Drugs and Their Prices.
<https://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/public-opinion-on-prescription-drugs-and-their-prices/>.