

February 17, 2023

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
357 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Braun
404 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Lankford
316 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thom Tillis
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tommy Tuberville
142 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is pleased to endorse the Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act of 2023 (S. 127). The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is a non-profit, volunteer-fueled organization dedicated to finding cures for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, and improving the quality of life of children and adults affected by these diseases. Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are chronic, degenerative autoimmune diseases collectively known as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). If not properly treated, IBD causes pain and a diminished quality of life, and can eventually lead to malnutrition, cognitive impairment, repeated hospitalizations, multiple surgeries, or event death.

IBD patients have benefitted greatly from the introduction of biologic medications that promote and extend disease remission. Biologic therapies offer a distinct advantage in IBD treatment because their mechanisms of action are more precisely targeted to the factors responsible for IBD. For example, unlike corticosteroids (which affect the whole body and may produce major side effects) biologic agents act very selectively. Unfortunately, these medications are quite expensive, and biosimilars have been slow to come to the market.

In response to these high costs, pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) have adopted a wide range of tactics that have perversely impacted access to biologics and biosimilars. The largest PBMs control around 80 percent of the market for prescription drugs and have enormous influence over which medicines are prescribed to patients, which pharmacies patients can access, and how much patients will pay at the pharmacy counter. Hidden rebate schemes have complicated market entry and often result in patients paying much more for medications than they cost the PBM. Yet, PBMs are one of the least understood or regulated sectors of the health care system.

IBD patients deserve to understand why PBMs are making the decisions that they do, and whether these decisions are financially motivated, or based on science. They should also share in any cost savings achieved by PBMs. The Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act would make great strides in revealing the true motives and operating practices of PBMs.

I thank you for your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to help ensure that the Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency becomes law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin McKeon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Erin McKeon
Associate Director, Federal Advocacy