



February 22, 2016

The Honorable Pat Toomey  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Kaine  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Toomey, Senator Brown, Senator Portman, and Senator Kaine:

On behalf of the Medicare Rights Center (Medicare Rights), I am writing to express support for the *Stopping Medication Abuse and Protecting Seniors Act of 2015* (S. 1913). Medicare Rights is a national, nonprofit organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counseling and advocacy, educational programs, and public policy initiatives. Our organization provides services and resources to over two million beneficiaries, family caregivers, and professionals annually.

This bipartisan legislation would establish a Patient Review and Restriction (PRR) program to identify Medicare beneficiaries at risk for prescription drug misuse. The PRR program would allow Part D plan sponsors to limit enrollees with questionable prescription drug utilization patterns to one prescriber and one pharmacy for a given medication. As this bill and similar legislation was developed in the U.S. House of Representatives, we advised Congress to design PRR programs with adequate consumer protections to ensure no unintended harm comes to those with a legitimate medical need for pain medications or other commonly misused prescriptions.<sup>1</sup>

As such, we appreciate that S. 1913 incorporates several critical beneficiary protections, including: a clinically-determined criteria for targeting at-risk beneficiaries; advance, written notification outlining beneficiary rights, resources, and the opportunity to choose a pharmacy and prescriber; exemptions for hospice beneficiaries and those residing in long-term care facilities; required plan audits and monitoring, including a report by the Department of Health and Human Services on opportunities to improve the Part D appeals process; and engagement with diverse stakeholders, including beneficiaries and consumer advocates.

To further strengthen the legislation, we continue to encourage stronger emphasis on provider education, specifically to limit inappropriate prescribing of frequently misused medications, which may lead to addiction and overuse. We look forward to working with you on this issue and other advancements to strengthen Medicare

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<sup>1</sup> Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), "Medicare Part D "Lock-In" Proposals Must Include Beneficiary Protections," (November 2014), available at: <http://www.lcao.org/files/2014/11/FINAL-LCAO-LockIn-Part-D-Brief.pdf>

for today's beneficiaries and for future generations. If you have questions, please contact Stacy Sanders, Federal Policy Director, at [ssanders@medicarerights.org](mailto:ssanders@medicarerights.org) or 202-637-0961. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Baker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Joe Baker  
President  
Medicare Rights Center