



March 2nd, 2021

Senator Ron Johnson

328 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Johnson

The most important thing Medicare Part D does is provide patients with access to life saving medications. For patients struggling with complex diagnoses such as cancer or mental illness, access to the best medication for them can make a huge difference to their quality of life.

Under the guise of lowering costs for the government, the Trump administration issued a new Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMMI) demo that offers plans the ability to modify coverage requirements of what are known as the six protected classes which cover some of the most complex medical issues. This “formulary flexibility” would hurt accessibility and have a negative impact on health outcomes for some of the most at-risk patients and do nothing to lower patients’ out of pocket costs.

Currently, the six protected classes cover anticonvulsants for treatment of seizures, antidepressants, antineoplastics, which prevent or inhibit the growth of cancerous tumors, antipsychotics which treat acute psychosis, antiretrovirals which treat HIV, and immunosuppressants which prevent organ rejection in transplant patients. The “formulary flexibility” in the CMMI demo would allow Part D plans to treat these drugs as they would any

other, no longer requiring that all drugs in these classes be covered, now covering just one drug per class.

This CMMI demo cannot be allowed to move forward, as it would drastically reduce access to life-saving medications while also potentially altering treatment plans for patients who are already successfully using one of these drugs. Covering a single drug in these complex categories would not lead to significant savings for patients but could instead result in patients being sick longer due to a lack of access, and in that way drive costs up.

As representatives working with patient populations that would be directly impacted by the change to the six protected classes, we strongly encourage the Administration to put patients first by preventing the implementation of this demo.

Sincerely,

American Liver Foundation

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging and Health Groups

Community Liver Alliance

Epilepsy Foundation Wisconsin

Great Lakes Hemophilia Foundation

Lupus Foundation of America, Wisconsin Chapter

National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin

National Marrow Donor Program/Be The Match®

Prevent Blindness Wisconsin

Southeastern Wisconsin Oncology Nursing Society

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE)

Vivent Health

Wisconsin Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons

Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition

Wisconsin Nurses Association

Wisconsin Rheumatology Association

Wisconsin State Grange