



September 4, 2018

The Honorable Michael Burgess, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Health
United States House of Representatives
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gene Green, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Health
United States House of Representatives
2470 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Burgess and Ranking Member Green,

On behalf of The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF), I write to express my support and appreciation for the Subcommittee's consideration of the draft legislation seeking to prohibit "gag clauses". It is estimated that nearly 1 million people in the United States have Parkinson's disease (PD), with an estimated annual economic burden of \$26.4 billion. MJFF is dedicated to safeguarding access to appropriate healthcare services and treatments for PD patients.

MJFF cautions against the continued implementation of unnecessary financial barriers for accessing prescription drugs. PD is a progressive neurological disorder and prompt access to the most affordable medications that are effective in treating the symptoms of PD and associated comorbidities are vital to PD patients' ability to suppress symptoms while maintaining their quality of life and independence.

Under current law, it is allowable for health insurance plans and/or pharmacy-benefits managers to prevent pharmacies/pharmacists from informing customers when their medication would be less expensive if they paid out of pocket, rather than utilize their health insurance plan. The draft legislation would protect patients and their families by prohibiting these restrictions, known as "gag clauses," for all health insurance issuers, including Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D prescription drug plans, so that pharmacists will be free to provide important guidance to patients regarding how to effectively minimize their prescription drug costs.

MJFF applauds the Subcommittee for its consideration and leadership on this important piece of draft legislation and thanks the Subcommittee for its continued commitment to ensuring patients' access to the prescription drugs necessary to maintain their quality of life and independence. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Stephanie Katz at skatz@michaeljfox.org or by phone at 202-638-4101 ext. 352

Sincerely,

Ted Thompson, JD
Senior Vice President of Public Policy