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May 8, 2020

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
Chair
Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Judy Chu
Member
House Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Schakowsky and Chu:

On behalf of Patient Access Network (PAN) Foundation and the patients and families we support, I write to express our support for the *Lower Drug Costs for Seniors During COVID-19 Act* (H.R. 6649). This legislation allows Medicare Part D beneficiaries electing to receive 90-day prescription refills to spread their co-pays over the same 90-day period. We would urge the inclusion of this legislation in the next COVID relief package.

Founded in 2004, PAN is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help underinsured people with life-threatening, chronic, and rare diseases get the medications and treatments their physicians prescribe for them by providing financial assistance for their out-of-pocket costs and by advocating for improved access and affordability. PAN provides patients with direct assistance through nearly 70 disease-specific programs and also collaborates with national patient advocacy organizations to provide patients with education and additional support. Since 2004, nearly one million underinsured patients have received financial assistance from the Foundation.

In early April, 2020, PAN established a program to offer financial assistance to Americans with serious illnesses who have COVID-19 or are quarantined because of the virus. Eligible Medicare beneficiaries receive a \$300 grant for COVID-19 treatment costs, prescription and over-the-counter medications, medical supplies and other important expenses, including transportation to medical appointments and groceries, meals and food delivery services. In just a few weeks, we have helped 1,500 patients.

More than 15 million older adults live on incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level, and 4.7 million live below poverty. For economically vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries, the impact of increased OOP costs due to COVID-19 now and in the future will present added burdens on top of their existing struggles to afford needed healthcare. These older adults, many of whom



are living with life-threatening, chronic and rare diseases, will find it increasingly difficult to afford out-of-pocket costs for their treatment.

H.R. 6649 helps beneficiaries, who are often on fixed monthly incomes, manage their medical expenses over time. Your bill makes it easier for seniors and the disabled to take advantage of the provision in the CARES Act that allows them to get three-month refills under Medicare Part D by spreading up-front copays over the 90-day period. Allowing beneficiaries to spread their payments over three months will increase access to needed treatments, improve adherence to treatment, and reduce the need to make trade-offs for other necessities.

PAN has long supported an annual and monthly out-of-pocket cap for Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Part D and therefore thank you for your leadership in seeking solutions to increase access to life-saving therapies for America's seniors and the disabled. We look forward to working with you to ensure H.R. 6649 is included in the next COVID relief package. If you would like further information or have questions, please contact Amy Niles, Executive Vice President (aniles@panfoundation.org, 202/661-8073).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dan Klein".

Dan Klein, MHS
President and Chief Executive Officer
Patient Access Network Foundation