

March 26, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

On behalf of the Patient Access Network (PAN) Foundation and the patients and families we support, I write to congratulate you on your successful appointment as Secretary of Health and Human Services. PAN looks forward to working with you and your team at HHS to increase access and affordability to health care and drug therapies for those most in need.

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.

As you expressed during your confirmation hearings, high out-of-pocket costs for prescription medications are a barrier to access for too many patients. These costs have created a public health crisis for some of the sickest and most financially vulnerable among us, including people being treated for cancer, hepatitis C, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and many other serious illnesses. Seniors are especially vulnerable: without protection against excessive out-of-pocket prescription drug costs, Medicare beneficiaries with Part D coverage are often forced to make difficult trade-offs or forgo treatment altogether.

PAN has been pleased to see strong support from Members of Congress and President Biden for drug pricing reforms. Specifically, we hope that you will work with Congress to cap out of pocket costs for prescription medications for Medicare Part D beneficiaries and allow beneficiaries to spread their payments over the course of the year. These two changes have bipartisan support, will increase access and adherence to needed treatments, and will go far in



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helping beneficiaries, who are often on fixed monthly incomes, manage their treatment expenses over time. In addition, we encourage you to support modernization of the federal Extra Help or Low-Income Subsidy program to increase enrollment and help save beneficiaries up to 85% of their out-of-pocket costs for prescription medications.

PAN has long advocated for these reforms to Medicare Part D and requests an opportunity to discuss these with you further. We look forward to working with you and being a resource to your team, including CMS Administrator-designate Chiquita Brooks-LaSure.

If you have any questions or to follow up on our meeting request, please contact Amy Niles, Executive Vice President at aniles@panfoundation.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Klein".

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

cc: Sean McCluskie, Chief of Staff