

June 14, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of millions of Medicare beneficiaries, we are writing to affirm our commitment to maintaining the Part D donut hole provisions that were included in the recently enacted Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2018. We applauded the inclusion of this provision in the BBA 2018 because it will particularly help beneficiaries who face the highest prescription drug costs.

As the cost of prescription drugs continues to rise, access to affordable prescription drugs is a key issue for older Americans. Those age 65 and older use prescription drugs more than any other segment of the U.S. population, typically on a chronic basis. However, older Americans continue to struggle to afford the drugs they need, and the cost of prescription drugs continues to rise. In 2015, the average price of brand-name drugs widely used by older Americans increased by 15.5%¹. We support reforms that will lower drug prices and provide relief to older Americans struggling to afford needed medications.

That is why we strongly support the important Part D donut hole reforms that were included in the recently enacted Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018. This includes closing the donut hole one year earlier and requiring higher manufacturer discounts on brand name prescription drugs for beneficiaries who are in the coverage gap. The higher discount will enable beneficiaries to move more quickly through the donut hole and help to lower their out-of-pocket costs. This critically important reform will enable beneficiaries who face high drug costs to pay less for their prescription drugs. Any

¹ <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2016-12/trends-in-retail-prices-dec-2016.pdf>

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efforts to roll back this progress would only serve to increase out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries.

We are acutely aware of the difficult decisions facing older Americans who struggle to afford the drugs they need. As drug prices continue to increase, it is imperative that we keep in place policies that will help to lower drug costs for beneficiaries and make it easier for them to access the medications they rely on. We urge you to stand with beneficiaries and resist any attempt to undo these important reforms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jo Ann Jenkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "A".

Jo Ann Jenkins
Chief Executive Officer