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August 8, 2018

Dear Representative:

On behalf of millions of Medicare beneficiaries, we are writing to express our strong opposition to efforts to roll back the Medicare Part D donut hole provisions that were included in the recently enacted Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2018. We are very concerned that you recently signed onto a letter that called for this beneficiary improvement to be re-visited. Undoing this progress will increase prescription drug costs for older Americans, particularly those who face the highest 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 oppose any efforts to undo reforms that will lower drug costs and help provide relief to older Americans struggling to afford needed medications.

For these reasons, AARP supported the important Part D donut hole reforms included in the BBA, and we are particularly concerned about a recent letter you signed that seeks to re-visit this change. Specifically, the BBA requires drug manufacturers to provide beneficiaries with a higher discount on their brand name prescription drugs while they are in the Part D coverage gap, which will allow them to move more quickly through the donut hole and 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. A recent study found that this change will save beneficiaries \$6.7 billion in out-of-pocket costs between 2020 and 2027.² Any efforts to roll back this progress and reduce the manufacturer discount would only serve to increase out-of-pocket costs for Medicare beneficiaries.

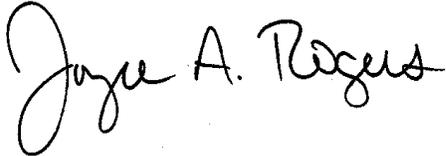
Unfortunately, there are continuing efforts to undo the reforms included in the BBA and increase drug costs for older Americans. As drug prices continue to increase, it is

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

² <http://avalere.com/expertise/life-sciences/insights/impact-of-coverage-gap-discount-changes-in-budget-agreement>

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 further attempts to undo these important reforms. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or Amy Kelbick on AARP's Government Affairs staff at akelbick@aar.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce A. Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joyce A. Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs