



January 30, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Prescription drug prices have reached a crisis point, with many Americans struggling to afford the medicine they need to stay healthy. We appreciate your attention to this problem that affects all Americans in some way. Next week, you will speak to the nation in your State of the Union address. We urge you to use this opportunity to highlight the problem and talk about what your administration will be doing, and how you will work with Congress to combat the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs.

AARP's most recent Rx Price Watch Report found that, on average, the retail prices of brand-name prescription drugs widely used by older Americans increased four times faster than the rate of inflation in 2017. Further, the average annual cost for a brand-name drug used on a chronic basis was nearly \$6,800, almost \$1,000 higher than the average annual cost in 2015.

These trends are particularly burdensome for older Americans who take an average of 4.5 prescription drugs per month. If they use brand name drugs to treat their conditions, their annual costs could be more than \$30,000. Meanwhile, the median income for Medicare beneficiaries is just over \$26,000. For too many Americans, this means having to choose between paying for the medicine they need to stay healthy and other necessities like food and housing. Unfortunately, it is clear that prescription drug companies are not willing to change their pricing practices.

AARP strongly supports reforms that will help lower prescription drug prices and provide relief to older Americans struggling to afford needed medications. To that end, we hope to continue working with you and your Administration to find solutions that will lower drug prices rather than simply shift costs around within the system. AARP strongly believes that we need solutions that focus on how drugs are priced when they first come to the market as well as how they increase over time.

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We are acutely aware of the difficult decisions facing older Americans because of rising prescription drug costs. It is imperative to enact policies that will provide relief to the millions of seniors who struggle to access the medications they need.

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Jenkins