



March 12, 2019

William T. Pound
Executive Director
National Conference of State Legislatures
444 North Capitol Street, NW Suite 515
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Pound:

Older Americans are struggling with rising prescription drug prices and cannot afford to wait any longer. Year-after-year they have seen prices increase by double-digits – with no end in sight. That is why 72 percent of older Americans say they are concerned about the cost of their medications, making it a priority for policymakers to act on prescription drug prices. Today, AARP is launching a nationwide campaign – in Washington and across the states – calling on lawmakers to enact legislation that will provide relief to older Americans and all consumers struggling to afford their prescription medications. There is no reason Americans should be paying the highest drug prices in the world. The time to act is now.

For the last 15 years, AARP has been tracking the prices of widely-used prescription drugs. Since 2006, the average annual price increases for brand name drugs have exceeded the corresponding rate of inflation every year since at least 2006. Our most recent [Rx Price Watch Report](#) found that the retail prices for brand-named drugs increased by an average of 8.4% in 2017 – four times the rate of inflation. AARP's report also examined how drug companies' relentless price increases add up over time. The average annual cost of one brand-name drug – now around \$6,800 – would have been just under \$2,200 in 2017 if retail price changes had been limited to general inflation between 2006 and 2017.¹

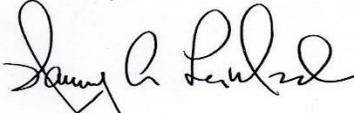
Current prescription drug price trends are simply not sustainable. High and growing drug prices are affecting all Americans in some way. Their cost is passed along to everyone with health coverage through increased health care premiums, deductibles, and other forms of cost-sharing. They are also driving larger cost increases for a variety of taxpayer-funded programs. States are grappling to find solutions to the problem of rising drug costs. Meanwhile, drug companies are working very hard to try to shift the blame to others in the health care system, leaving them free to set incredibly high prices and increase them with little restraint.

¹ <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2018/09/trends-in-retail-prices-of-brand-name-prescription-drugs-year-end-update.pdf>

As part of the Campaign being launched today, AARP will be working to advance federal solutions with the Administration and Congress, and simultaneously pursuing a range of state reforms to address the high price of prescription drugs, which impact both consumers' pocketbooks and state budgets.

As our campaign advances, we look forward to working with the National Conference of State Legislatures and your members to enact solutions that will lower prescription drug prices and costs. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Elaine Ryan, Vice President for AARP Government Affairs State Advocacy and Strategy Integration at (202) 434-3750.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy A. LeaMond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and "L".

Nancy A. LeaMond
Executive Vice President and
Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer