



March 27, 2019

The Honorable Anna Eshoo  
Chairperson  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on Health  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Burgess, MD  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on Health  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairperson Eshoo and Ranking Member Burgess:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 131,400 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to share the organization's support for several important bills to protect the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's* consumer protections and to reduce the cost of prescription drugs and biosimilars.

The AAFP believes that all people regardless of social, economic or political status, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, should have access to primary medical care and other essential health care services. Care should be comprehensive, affordable, and include protections for those with financial hardships. Having both health insurance and a usual source of care (e.g., through an ongoing relationship with a family physician) contributes to better health outcomes, reduced disparities along socioeconomic lines, and reduced costs.<sup>i</sup>

#### Maintaining the Affordable Care Act's Protections

Research has demonstrated that access to primary care helps increase access to high quality and lower cost care by encouraging preventive health, access to acute care, early identification of chronic disease, and disease management. The benefits of primary care access are realized at the individual, health system, and community level. Therefore, it is imperative to maintain the ACA's state and federal partnerships and consumer protections. Based on the organization's health care for all principles,<sup>ii</sup> the AAFP is pleased to support the following legislative initiatives:

- **HR 986, *Protecting Americans with Preexisting Conditions Act of 2019*;**
- **HR 1010, *legislation to prohibit the expansion of short-term, limited duration insurance plans*; and**
- **HR 1143, *Educating Consumers on the Risks of Short-Term Plans Act of 2019*.**

#### Increasing Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs

Managing prescription drug prices for their patients is an important concern for family physicians. Family physicians have a meaningful interest in the drug pricing debate, in part, because of the complexity of care family physicians provide and the fact that the number and intricacy of conditions, complaints, and diseases seen in family medicine is [far greater](#) than those seen by

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any other physician specialty. Ensuring access to medications is an integral part of physicians' role as advocates for their patients. Unfortunately, and too frequently, family physicians encounter patients who cannot afford their medications and thus cannot adhere to treatment recommendations. Physicians themselves also face recurrent and burdensome administrative requirements like prior authorizations that create treatment barriers. According to a 2017 American Medical Association [survey](#), 92 percent of physician respondents reported care delays due to prior authorizations and 78 percent reported that prior authorizations can lead to treatment abandonment.

Given the public's reliance on generic products, which represent over 89 percent of medications filled, increasing access to these products must be a top priority. Therefore, the AAFP supports the following bills that would increase access to prescription medications through enhanced market competition:

- **HR 965, *Creating and Restoring Equal Access to Equivalent Samples (CREATES) Act*;**
- **HR 985, *Fair Access for Safety and Timely (FAST) Generics Act*;**
- **HR 938, *Bringing Low-cost Options and Competition while Keeping Incentives for New Generics (BLOCKING) Act of 2019*; and**
- **HR 1499, *Protecting Consumer Access to Generic Drugs Act of 2019*.**

We are pleased to comment on these bills and look forward to working with you to advance other comprehensive health care policies. For more information, please contact Sonya Clay, Government Relations Representative, at 202-232-9033 or [sclay@aafp.org](mailto:sclay@aafp.org).

Sincerely,



Michael L. Munger, MD, FAAFP  
Board Chair

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<sup>i</sup> See, e.g., The Robert Graham Center, The Importance of Having Health Insurance and a Usual Source of Care, Am. Fam. Physician (Sept. 15, 2004), available at <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2004/0915/p1035.html>.

<sup>ii</sup> AAFP, Health Care For All (2014), available at <http://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/health-care-for-all.html>