

‘Any willing pharmacy’: RxPreferred Benefits Joins Letter to Congress, Endorses Bill

RxPreferred Benefits announces support for Ensuring Seniors Access to Local Pharmacies Act (H.R. 4577)

On June 10, RxPreferred joined an open letter to Congress expressing “unified support” for giving Medicare patients more convenient access to discounted or “preferred” copays at independent community pharmacies willing to accept the terms and conditions of Medicare Part D prescription drug plans.

“Right now, seniors in many communities face either trips of 20 miles or more to reach a ‘preferred’ pharmacy or must assume higher copays to use a local pharmacy they have maintained a trusted relationship with for many years,” especially in rural and underserved communities, wrote the more than 130 organizations that signed the letter. “Seniors should have greater access to discounted or ‘preferred’ copays at independent community pharmacies.”

Although CMS decided not to finalize a proposed “any willing pharmacy” provision in its recently released 2015 Medicare Part D final rule, the agency expressed its “continued support for this concept based on [its] belief that opening restrictive pharmacy networks would have significant benefits including increased access for beneficiaries to reduced copayments [without] increased prices,” according to the letter. More than 30 Members of Congress support ensuring the “any willing pharmacy” standard for preferred pharmacy networks.

The letter was signed by pharmacist (e.g., RxPreferred Benefits, National Community Pharmacists Association, many other leading pharmacist and pharmacy organizations), patient advocacy (e.g., Caregiver Action Network, National Rural Health Association, The National Grange, U.S. Pain Foundation), other health care providers (e.g., AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, McKesson Corp.) and business organizations (e.g., Food Marketing Institute, National Federation of Independent Businesses, National Grocers Association) at the national, regional, and state levels.