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June 4, 2015

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Angus King  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Manchin, King, and Capito:

On behalf of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research and policy organization, we are writing to express Pew's support for Section 7 of the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2015, which would allow Medicare Part D plan sponsors to require patients at risk of drug abuse to use pre-designated pharmacies and prescribers to obtain prescriptions for opioids and some additional controlled substances. These drug-management programs, which are also known as Patient Review and Restriction programs (PRRs), are a critical tool for addressing the national epidemic of prescription drug abuse.

PRRs can improve continuity of care among at-risk patients and provide improved drug therapy management. However, current law does not permit their use in Medicare. This legislation would authorize the use of PRRs in Medicare Part D, expanding the number of tools that are available to plan sponsors to combat prescription drug abuse. The legislation also includes beneficiary protections that would ensure patients with legitimate medical needs have access to effective pain control.

There is broad bipartisan, bicameral support for these programs as demonstrated by policy proposals put forward on both sides of the Capitol and in the FY 2016 Budget request for the Department of Health and Human Services. The breadth of this action reflects a shared interest in advancing this policy as an effective tool to decrease abuse of opioids and other controlled substances. Pew urges Congress to pass legislation that authorizes these programs in Medicare to help address the nation's prescription drug abuse epidemic.

Pew thanks you for your work on this important public health policy and looks forward to working with Congress to advance legislation that maximizes the impact of PRRs and ensures the policy works as intended.

Sincerely,

Allan Coukell  
Senior Director, Health Programs  
The Pew Charitable Trusts

Cynthia Reilly  
Director, Prescription Drug Abuse  
The Pew Charitable Trusts