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December 05, 2015

The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim McDermott  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member McDermott:

On behalf of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy and advocacy organization, we are writing to express Pew's support for authorizing language included in the bipartisan Protecting the Integrity of Medicare Act of 2014 that will allow Medicare Part D plan sponsors to use drug management programs for patients at-risk of prescription drug abuse. These 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 work by requiring patients at risk of drug abuse to get their controlled substances from pre-designated prescribers and pharmacies, thereby allowing plan sponsors to better coordinate patient care and prevent inappropriate access to medications that are susceptible to abuse. PRRs help reduce the risk of opioid abuse; however, current law does not permit their use in Medicare Part D plans. This legislation authorizes the use of PRRs in Medicare Part D, expanding the options available to plan sponsors to address opioid overuse and improve continuity of care among at-risk patients. It also provides beneficiary protections that balance the need to reduce the inappropriate use of prescription drugs while ensuring patients with legitimate medical needs have access to effective pain control.

Thank you for your continued bipartisan leadership on this issue, and the opportunity to provide feedback on the legislation throughout the development process. We look forward to ongoing collaboration with Congress to ensure that PRRs work as intended, including the proposed role of Medicare Drug Integrity Contractors in exchanging information between plan sponsors, state prescription drug monitoring plans, and other stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Allan Coukell  
Senior Director, Health Programs  
The Pew Charitable Trusts

Cynthia Reilly  
Director, Prescription Drug Abuse  
The Pew Charitable Trusts