

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 19, 2018

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

Thank you for your work to support military families and interest in improving their prescription drug benefits. We appreciate your agreement to convene a working group to find a viable path forward within the Department of Defense (DoD) to restore beneficiaries' access to community pharmacies, regardless of whether their needed medication(s) are brand or generic manufactured. We write today to encourage advancement of this important work and to note that the undersigned members of the Senate share an interest in realizing a solution that will improve point-of-service choice, convenience and access to pharmacist care within the TRICARE Program.

We are encouraged by the plan to convene a working group that includes key stakeholders from DoD, the pharmaceutical manufacturing community and the retail pharmacy industry with the goal to examine, test and make recommendations on how DoD may maximize point-of-service options for beneficiaries who rely on brand name maintenance medications. We look forward to reviewing recommendations, including interim findings, over the next six months.

As you are aware, beneficiaries relying on these medications are required to access their needed prescriptions through the mail or at a Military Treatment Facility (MTF). For many of our constituents, a MTF is too distant to be a viable option. TRICARE beneficiaries and their families stand to benefit from updating current policy.

Convening stakeholders to explore changes to DoD's prescription drug acquisition process that would achieve cost parity among the points of service is an important step. We are confident that, under your leadership, the working group will rigorously and objectively examine how DoD may feasibly add choices for beneficiaries who often face no other option but to receive their needed medications by mail. Restoring access to retail pharmacies for brand-name maintenance medications, coupled with a savings to DoD, would:

- add choice for beneficiaries;
- improve access to pharmacist care; and
- alleviate, through savings, pressures to increase cost sharing (including copays).

Given your interim duties at the Department of Veterans Affairs, we ask that you assure continuity by DoD for this important endeavor until your return. We look forward to hearing how the stakeholders could find a path to allow TRICARE beneficiaries and their family members to access brand maintenance medications at retail pharmacies, as they can at MTFs and through mail order, while enabling the government to realize cost parity and, where feasible, opportunities for savings.

Thank you for your work to accomplish these important objectives.

Sincerely,



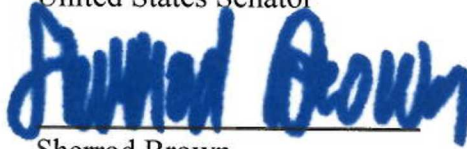
M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



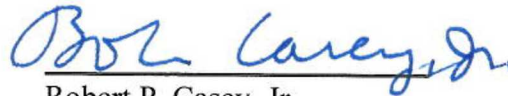
Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
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Tom Cotton
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United States Senator



Steve Daines
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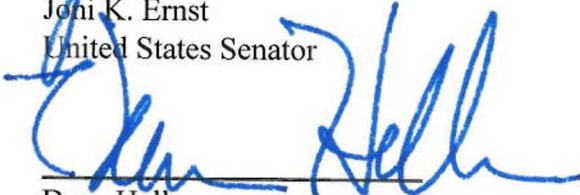
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



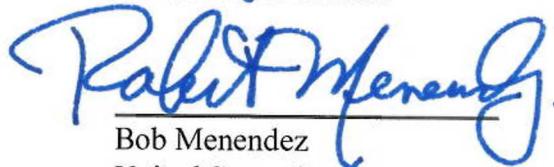
Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



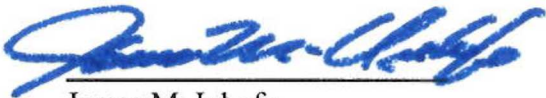
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United States Senator



Dean Heller
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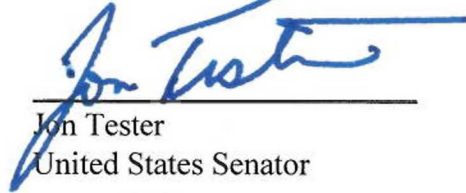
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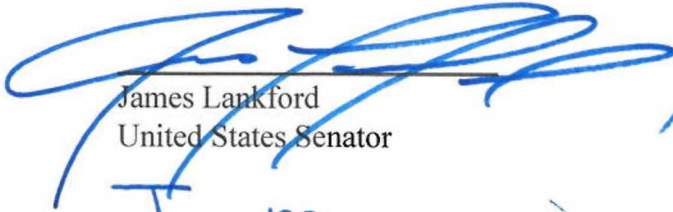
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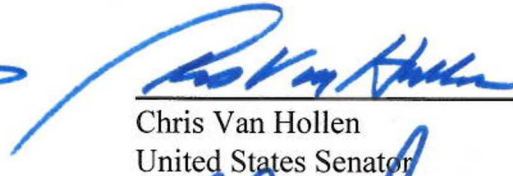
Johnny Isakson
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Jon Tester
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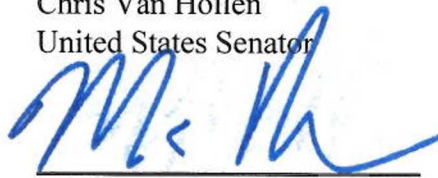
James Lankford
United States Senator



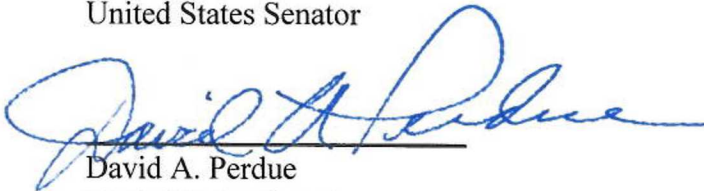
Chris Van Hollen
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Jerry Moran
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Pat Roberts
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cc: Ms. Stephanie Barna