



AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

July 5, 2017

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
United States House of Representatives
2434 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Guthrie:

I write in support of H.R. 592, the Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act. This legislation helps address the shortfall of healthcare coverage in medically underserved areas by allowing qualified pharmacists to perform certain healthcare services.

While much of the healthcare debate has focused on ensuring individuals have health insurance and choice, less attention has been paid to whether individuals have access to the care they need.

This problem is likely to get worse in the future. By 2020, there will be a shortage of 91,000 doctors, according to an estimate by the Association of American Medical Colleges. This shortage will be felt especially hard in medically underserved communities, defined as areas of population with few primary care providers, and high infant mortality, high poverty, or a high older adult population.

H.R. 592 would help address this problem by designating pharmacists as “non-physician providers” under Medicare Part B. This would allow trained professionals to provide certain patient care services based on what is permitted under a state’s scope of practice laws. In turn, this would help meet the shortage of physicians and the demand for healthcare services by allowing the healthcare needs of underserved communities to be met.

While this legislation may increase costs initially, over the long term H.R. 592 would result in strong savings. As noted in a report to the U.S. Surgeon General, increasing access to care could provide \$4 in health care savings for every \$1 spent. Individuals that are not receiving upfront healthcare treatment from physicians inevitably must be treated later when their condition has deteriorated at a greater expense to the healthcare system.

As a result, this legislation will streamline the healthcare system and allow the truly needy access to care.

The Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act is one way to increase the efficiency of the healthcare system. Expanding the ability of the truly needy to access care will result in billions of savings over the long term and decrease pressure on the nation’s health system. As such, this important legislation should be supported by all Members of Congress.

Onward,

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President, Americans for Tax Reform

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