

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 10, 2016

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Senate Health, Education, Labor,  
and Pensions Committee  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Senate Health, Education, Labor,  
and Pensions Committee  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

Thank you for your leadership this year to examine how Congress can facilitate innovative drug development as well as improve America's health care system. We have heard from several patient groups with chronic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel diseases, and psoriasis, on the difficulties of accessing care and treatment. We write to request that you review patient perspectives on access to care, particularly on high out-of-pocket costs for treatment.

Several health care trends make it difficult for patients to access their care, including high out-of-pocket costs. The use of specialty tiers as well as co-insurance is skyrocketing. Cost sharing can reach as high as 30%-60%, causing a significant financial burden and leading to poor adherence and non-adherence. Studies demonstrate that rates of prescription abandonment begin at a cost sharing level of \$100 per month and increase significantly when the cost sharing reaches \$500 per month.

Innovative medicines and treatment advancements have greatly improved the quality of life for patients suffering from debilitating, chronic diseases. Accessing the care needed is critical for these patients to achieve optimal health outcomes. Delays in treatment can result in irreversible disease progression and even, exacerbate the cost of care for both the patient and the health system.

Thank you for your consideration. We applaud your work to continue to strengthen the nation's health system and hope that you will hold a hearing, roundtable, or other mechanism to review the patient perspective on high out-of-pocket costs and their ability to access care.



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senator

Sincerely,



SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO  
United States Senator



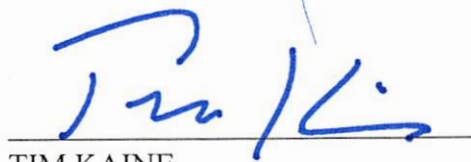
KELLY A. AYOTTE  
United States Senator



MICHAEL F. BENNET  
United States Senator



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senator



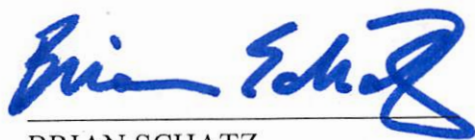
TIM KAINE  
United States Senator



ANGUS S. KING, JR.  
United States Senator



AMY KLOBUCHAR  
United States Senator



BRIAN SCHATZ  
United States Senator



CHARLES E. SCHUMER  
United States Senator