



October 30, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar III  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

**Re: Support Safety-Net Providers and the 340B Drug Pricing Program**

Dear Secretary Azar:

Congress created the 340B drug pricing program to support safety-net providers, treat patients in need, and offer vital services. For more than 25 years, the 340B program has supported the safety-net and made sure it is intact for people living with chronic medical and mental health conditions. As COVID-19 plagues America, increased poverty rates remain a stark reality for patients who depend on safety-net providers. Additionally, many of the communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic already face disproportionate health care barriers. Equitable health care is especially critical.

As a health community, we are deeply concerned about some pharmaceutical manufacturers' recent actions to limit access to discounted prices for certain prescription drugs purchased by safety-net hospitals, health centers, and clinics. These covered entities serve people living with low incomes and who reside in underserved rural communities.

Threats to the safety net are concerning stakeholders representing the patient, provider, consumer, and social justice organizations' needs. Actions that limit access to prescription drugs purchased by safety-net hospitals, health centers, and clinics will harm communities of color, low-income, and rural populations. This further divides and disproportionately impacts racially and ethnically diverse communities.

Amid a global pandemic and recession, Medicaid and 340B are more critical than ever before, providing essential resources for providers who treat patients with the greatest health care needs. A strong safety net includes preserving Medicaid and protecting the 340B drug pricing program. As the number of uninsured Americans continues to rise, this is not the time to inflict financial harm on safety-net providers.

Please use your legal authority to stop unlawful actions that deny discounted drug pricing to hospitals and other covered entities before they cause irreparable damage to the safety net and compromise resources needed for patient care.

Sincerely,

Advocates

Action Wellness	AIDS Alabama	AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families	AIDS Foundation Chicago	AIDS United
American Academy of HIV Medicine	American Association on Health and Disability	American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees	American Federation of Teachers	American Public Health Association
American Rural Health Association	APLA Health	Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America	Black AIDS Institute	Black Women's Health Imperative
Cascade AIDS project	Catholic Charities USA	Coalition on Human Needs	Collaborative Solutions, Inc.	Communications Workers of America
Community Education Group	Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces	CrescentCare	Desert AIDS Project	Entre Hermanos
Equitas Health	Fenway Health	Harm Reduction Coalition	Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	Hemophilia Federation of America
Hep Free Hawaii	Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group-HCMSG	Howard Brown Health	Human Rights Campaign	Illinois Public Health Association
JustUs Health	Lakeshore Foundation	Latino Commission on AIDS	Los Angeles LGBT Center	Metro Inclusive Health
Michael Reese Research and Education Foundation	My Brother's Keeper	NAACP	National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd	National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health	National Association of Social Workers	National Council of Negro Women	National Dental Association	National Hemophilia Foundation
National Indian Health Board	National Nurse-Led Care Consortium	National Partnership for Women & Families	National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable	National WIC Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice	North Carolina AIDS Action Network	Prism Health North Texas	Service Employees International Union (SEIU)	Southern AIDS Coalition
The AIDS Institute	Vivent Health	Whitman-Walker Institute		

CC: Thomas J. Engels  
Administrator  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Rear Admiral Krista Pedley  
Director, Office of Pharmacy Affairs  
Health Resources and Services Administration