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**Push For Lower Rx Prices: Over 70 Organizations Call For Meaningful Progress On Comprehensive Drug Pricing Reforms By Memorial Day**

*Campaign Urges Senate To Advance Reconciliation Package Including Reforms Already Passed By House*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—April 25, 2022. Over [70 organizations](#) representing patients, consumers, seniors, unions, small businesses, large employers, physicians, nurses, and disease advocacy groups today launched the campaign “Push For Lower Rx Prices.” The campaign calls on the Senate to advance a reconciliation package by Memorial Day that includes the comprehensive drug price provisions already passed by the House of Representatives. Organizations will be engaging in activities to push this legislation forward, such as by running digital and TV ads, driving constituent contact to Capitol Hill, elevating patient stories, and organizing grassroots activities on social media to press the Senate to take action.

The campaign kicked off with a press conference on Capitol Hill. Speakers included Senators Amy Klobuchar (MN) and Catherine Cortez Masto (NV), patient advocates, and representatives from Doctors for America, AARP, Patients For Affordable Drugs Now, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the Purchaser Business Group on Health. *Speaker quotes from the press conference are listed below.*

“It is unacceptable that in a nation as wealthy as ours, 1 in 4 people have difficulty affording their prescriptions and we allow people to die because they do not have the money to pay for their lifesaving medicines. A person should never be forced to choose between buying the insulin they need to stay alive and keeping a roof over their head or food on the table for their families,” said Rita K. Kuwahara, MD, MIH and a national leader at Doctors for America. “Essential medicines such as insulin should be accessible and affordable for all, and it is critical that we, as a nation, commit to keeping families and communities healthy by guaranteeing that

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no one pays more than \$35 dollars out-of-pocket per month for insulin, regardless of health insurance status. We must also ensure that every person has access to the medicines they need when they need them, regardless of finances, and allow Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices, similar to how the Department of Veterans Affairs allows drug price negotiation. Congress must act now to make medicines affordable for all. Only once we ensure universal access to affordable lifesaving medicines will we begin to address existing health inequities and move towards improving the health of everyone in our nation."

A new national survey was also released today that demonstrates overwhelming bipartisan voter support for comprehensive drug pricing reform, including 83 percent of voters who back Medicare negotiation and 77 percent in favor of limiting annual drug price increases. Results also show that nearly 80 percent know the pharmaceutical industry can live with slightly lower profits and still provide the true innovation patients need, and 67 percent want Congress to take action to lower prices set by drug companies, not just to reduce out-of-pocket costs.

The drug price provisions under consideration by the Senate will, for the first time, authorize Medicare to negotiate prices directly for some of the most expensive prescription medicines, including insulin; institute a hard cap on out-of-pocket drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries and limit copays on insulin for millions of Americans to \$35 each month; and limit annual price increases to stop price gouging by drug corporations.

*The following are quotes from the speakers at today's press conference:*

"The moment for action is now. After years of promises to lower the prices of prescription drugs, voters are demanding elected officials follow through and pass meaningful reforms to fix the U.S. drug pricing system," said **David Mitchell, a patient with incurable blood cancer whose drugs carry a list price of more than \$900,000 per year and founder of Patients For Affordable Drugs Now.** "The House of Representatives has done its job by passing comprehensive reform, and the president has endorsed the package. It now falls to the Senate, through the reconciliation process, to enact the policies. The votes are there for this historic legislation, which will change the trajectory of drug prices in the United States and finally put patients first."

"Giving Medicare the power to negotiate will save seniors and taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. American families cannot afford to lose that kind of money due to high drug prices," said **Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO of AARP.** "AARP is fully committed to this fight and we won't stop until we get relief for older Americans. Today we are calling on Congress to make this a priority for action now. It's time to get this done!"

"It's time for Congress to fulfill its promise to lower the amount working families pay for prescription drugs," said **Bill Kramer, Executive Director for Health Policy at the Purchaser Business Group on Health.** "Drug prices are already too high and are continuing to rise, bankrupting families, putting financial strain on businesses and dragging down the U.S. economy. Doing nothing is simply not an option. Policy solutions to lower drug costs must apply to all Americans in the name of fairness. The 180 million workers and families who receive health coverage through employers must not be left behind."

"Six MS disease modifying treatments (DMTs) have increased in price more than 200% since coming on the market and people with MS face an out-of-pocket Medicare cost of more than \$6,000 just for their MS DMT," said **Bari Talente, executive vice president of advocacy and**

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**healthcare access at the National MS Society.** “Every day Congress delays, people with MS make the difficult decision to stop taking their medication due to cost and risk disease progression from which they won’t recover.”

“Lyrica is priced at nearly \$800 for just one bottle. I simply cannot afford that. So I made the very tough decision to go without it — forcing myself to live in pain, take less ideal medications, and retire early,” said **Meg Jackson-Drage, a fibromyalgia patient and Medicare beneficiary from Utah.** “We shouldn’t have to live in this reality. That is why I flew all the way from Utah this week to come here and beg the Senate to finally deliver on its promise to bring relief to me and millions of Americans.”

“After graduating, I want to go to law school. But my dreams and independence are threatened by having to constantly worry about affording my treatment. I shouldn’t have to choose between furthering my education and my mobility,” said **Jacqueline Garibay, an ankylosing spondylitis patient from Texas.** “I want the Senate to understand that passing comprehensive drug pricing reform will give me and millions of others peace of mind and the ability to pursue our dreams without worrying about whether the price of our drugs will stand in the way.”

Recordings and photos of the event are available upon request.

### **About Doctors for America**

Doctors for America mobilizes doctors and medical students to be leaders in putting patients over politics to improve the health of our patients, communities, and nation. We are 20,000 physicians and medical students in all 50 states in representing all areas of specialization. Our impact areas focus on access to affordable care, community health and prevention, and health justice and equity. Find out more at [doctorsforamerica.org](http://doctorsforamerica.org) and on Twitter [@drsforamerica](https://twitter.com/drsforamerica).

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