

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS & PATIENT ADVOCATES APPLAUD U.S. SENATE BILL TO STUDY ROLE OF PBM INDUSTRY



'Pharmacy Benefit Manager Accountability Study Act' Can Shine Light on Prescription Drug Pricing

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A new Bill introduced in the United States Senate on February 8, 2021 to study the pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) industry is moving forward with a referral to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions for consideration. The proposal, **S. 298** is being met with optimism by medical professionals and patient advocates from the **Alliance for Transparent and Affordable Prescriptions** (ATAP) with direct experience with these "middlemen" that place upward pressure on prescription drug pricing.

The Senate Bill introduced **by Senator Marsha Blackburn (TN)** and cosponsored **by Senator Mike Braun (IN)** will "...require the Government Accountability Office to study the role pharmaceutical benefit managers play in the pharmaceutical supply chain and provide Congress with appropriate policy recommendations, and for other purposes..."

"Anything that shines a light on the PBM industry is a wonderful first step," stated ATAP's President Dr. Robert Levin. "For far too long, PBMs generated significant profits while patients struggle to afford the cost of prescription drugs. It is time that elected officials and policy makers see what it really happening in our exam rooms, and our patient's wallets, due to PBM interference.

ATAP has been an active advocate for patients in a variety of federal and state battles to amplify the voices of patients and physicians.

"Surely if this Bill passes, the study will show what we see every day. Patients are suffering under the current system that allows PBMs to put obstacles between patients and the medicine they need," stated Dr. Michael Schweitz of the **Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations**, and ATAP member organization. "Now that light is shining on the previously hidden profit motives of the PBM industry, patients, physicians, and policy makers will have the power to effect meaningful change."

In addition to legislative efforts, ATAP filed **an Amicus Brief with the United States Supreme Court** that argued in part that PBMs are engaged in abusive practices with serious practical and policy consequences – including upward pressure on prescription drug pricing. The case, *Rutledge vs Pharmaceutical Care Management Association (PCMA)* resulted in a unanimous 8-0 decision where Justices agreed that states have the rights to impose regulations on PBMs.

Dr. Angus Worthing of the **American College of Rheumatology**, an ATAP member organization stated, "The United States Senate, the Supreme Court, and state legislators across the country are realizing on a bipartisan basis how the hidden profit motives of the PBM industry are harming patients. More transparency is desperately needed, and the latest Senate proposal will provide it."

ATAP continues to support efforts to force the PBM industry to disclose rebate data and encourage transparency and reporting requirements for all entities involved in the prescription drug supply chain – PBMs, insurers, and manufacturers.

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To schedule an interview with Dr. Levin or another ATAP spokesperson, please contact Dan Rene of kglobal at 202-329-8357.

Please visit <http://www.atapadvocates.com>

ATAP's mission is to address prescription drugs costs and patient access to affordable treatment by regulating PBM practices and reforming the drug industry through educational outreach and grassroots advocacy initiatives at both the state and federal level.

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