

August 12, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

We are state and local officials concerned about the growing burden of prescription drug prices. Our constituents are struggling to afford their medicines. Our state budgets are stretched by the cost of new therapies. This is why we welcome the Biden Administration's new effort to promote competition in the American economy, and your work to develop a plan to lower the price of prescription drugs. As part of this plan, we urge you to explain how you will break patent monopolies and introduce generic competition when drug corporations set excessive prices that harm patients.

Nearly every week, we hear about the terrible toll taken by high drug prices. They force people in our communities to make impossible choices between their health and other necessities. Medicines like insulin, PrEP for HIV, and the cure for hepatitis C are still out of reach for too many people. High drug prices harm public health. They also reflect a deeply unfair system. American taxpayers continue to spend billions of dollars bankrolling pharmaceutical research and development, only to be charged the highest medicine prices in the world.

The federal government has the tools to help us. The government should use its existing authorities such as the Bayh-Dole Act and 28 U.S. Code §1498, to authorize competition and clear patent monopolies that keep medicines priced out of reach. Previous experience has shown that using these powers can bring immediate relief. Lower prescription drug prices would help patients. It would also allow our states to better channel resources towards improving public health.

We need the federal government to act swiftly. Americans support bold action. One poll found that 84% of voters back breaking patent monopolies to lower drug prices.<sup>1</sup> Developing a plan to use all existing authorities to reduce prescription drug prices can help make medicines work for all of us.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Albornoz, Montgomery County, MD Council Vice President  
Seth Berry, Maine State Representative, 55th District  
Jill Billings, Wisconsin State Representative, 95th District  
Heidi Brooks, Maine State Representative, 61st District  
Kelly Cassidy, Illinois State Representative, 14th District  
Tim Carpenter, Wisconsin State Senator, 3rd District

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Summary of Arnold Ventures March 2019 Drug Pricing Polling, <https://tinyurl.com/amhrukzf>

Lorig Charkoudian, Maryland State Delegate, 20th District  
Ben Chipman, Maine State Senator, 27th District  
Ryan Clancy, Milwaukee County Supervisor, 4th District  
Michele Gregory, Salisbury, MD Councilmember, 4th District  
Will Guzzardi Illinois State Representative, 39th District  
Maria Hadden, Chicago, IL Alderwoman, 49th Ward  
Francesca Hong, Wisconsin State Representative, 76th District  
Will Jawando, Montgomery County, MD Councilmember At-Large  
LaTonya Johnson, Wisconsin State Senator, 6th District  
Chris Larson, Wisconsin State Senator, 7th District  
Matt Martin, Chicago, IL Alderman, 47th Ward  
Todd J. Nock, Pocomoke, MD Councilmember, 4th District  
Laurie Osher, Maine State Representative, 123rd District  
Robert Peters, Illinois State Senator, 13th District  
Amy Roeder, Maine State Representative, 125th District  
Sheila Ruth, Maryland State Delegate, District 44B  
Kristina Shelton, Wisconsin State Representative, 90th District  
Christine Sinicki, Wisconsin State Representative, 20th District  
Maureen Terry, Maine State Representative, 26th District  
Andre Vasquez, Chicago, IL Alderman, 40th Ward  
Jheanelle Wilkins, Maryland State Delegate, 20th District  
Ben Wilson, Viroqua, WI City Counselor, 5th Ward  
Sam Zager, MD, Maine State Representative, 41st District

cc: President Joe Biden  
The Honorable Dr. Francis Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health  
The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
The Honorable Tim Wu, Special Assistant to the President for Technology and Competition Policy  
The Honorable Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs