

March 25, 2009

Nancy-Ann DeParle, Director
White House Office of Health Reform
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. DeParle:

The pharmacy coalition, whose organizational members are listed below and which represent all segments of pharmacy practice and education, commend President Obama for his commitment to aggressively pursuing reform of the nation's health care system and for convening the first White House Forum on Health Care Reform. We were particularly encouraged to hear the President's opening comment, "In this effort, every voice must be heard. Every idea must be considered. Every option must be on the table. There will be no sacred cows in this discussion." As the third largest and most accessible health care profession, pharmacists play a critical role in providing accessible, affordable and quality health care for patients. We believe that more fully utilizing the profession of pharmacy can further improve quality of care and decrease health care cost. We respectfully request an opportunity to present the profession's recommendations for improving medication access and use.

By promoting and utilizing the professional clinical skills and competencies of pharmacists, the goal of improved patient therapeutic outcomes will be more effectively realized. In addition, recognizing and relying on the clinical knowledge and expertise of pharmacists will help address the serious consequences of improper medication use which costs our nation close to \$200 billion dollars a year in preventable medication-related errors. An increasing evidence base indicates that pharmacists help keep health care costs down through pharmacist-provided patient care services, such as educating patients on how to take their prescription medications properly and safely. As we look to reform our health care system, it would be truly unfortunate not to include system changes that reflect successful public and private sector programs that provide patients access to pharmacist-provided patient care services, such as the one that Ken Powell, CEO of General Mills, highlighted during the Forum. Broadening access to these types of programs has the potential to improve the health of hundreds of thousands of patients. As lawmakers continue discussions on how best to reform the health care system, it is critical that patients have access to pharmacist-provided care if we want to ensure that we obtain the best possible outcomes from the primary form of therapeutic treatment — medications.

On February 12, 2009, all of pharmacy's national organizations released the [*Pharmacy Principles for Health Care Reform*](#), which outline three goals related to medication access and use that should be an integral part of any health reform debate:

- 1) Improve quality and safety of medication use
- 2) Assure patient access to needed medications and pharmacy services
- 3) Promote pharmacy and health information technology (HIT) interoperability

It is time to optimize medication use by accessing the knowledge and skills of today's pharmacists — a highly trained and valuable, yet underutilized resource. We urge President Obama and his Administration to include pharmacists as active participants in developing the framework for our reformed health care system and to include pharmacists as part of the solution.

We look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you and to work with the Administration in addressing our nation's health care needs.

Sincerely,

Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American Pharmacists Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Food Marketing Institute
National Alliance of State Pharmacy Association
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Community Pharmacists Association
Rite Aid Corporation
Walgreen Co.

cc: Lauren Arsonson