



October 30, 2009

The Honorable Daniel Akaka
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Akaka:

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) supports the provision in S. 252, The Veterans Health Reauthorization Bill, that would provide special incentive pay for pharmacist executives. ASHP is highly supportive of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) program that attempts to meet the challenges that exist in recruiting health professionals to serve in the Department. Allowing additional comparability pay would help alleviate the recruitment barriers to fill these key pharmacy leadership positions in the VA. This will help close the gap in pay disparity between the public and private sectors, and will serve as a key component to providing quality patient care.

ASHP is the 35,000-member national professional association that represents pharmacists who practice in hospitals and other components of health care systems. Hospital and health-system pharmacists serve on interdisciplinary patient-care teams, ensuring that the use of medicines is safe, effective, and cost-conscious. Our membership also includes pharmacists who practice within the VA system.

As the third-largest health profession, pharmacists are typically the health professional the patient sees the most. Further, the medication expertise of pharmacists is becoming a critical element of a more coordinated patient care approach that seeks to optimize patient outcomes. As a result, many of the public health programs have begun to more fully utilize the services of pharmacists. ASHP hopes that through passage of S. 252, the VA will be better able to recruit the pharmacy leaders needed to guide new and innovative care delivery resulting in cost-effective quality care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henri R. Manasse, Jr.', is positioned above the typed name.

Henri R. Manasse, Jr., Ph.D., Sc.D
Executive Vice President and CEO

TOGETHER WE MAKE A GREAT TEAM