



7272 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
301-657-3000
Fax: 301-664-8877
www.ashp.org

February 22, 2010

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) thanks you for your commitment to reforming our nation's health care system. Like virtually all health care stakeholders, ASHP supports the goals of improving access to care, providing the highest-quality care possible, and reducing unnecessary costs to the health care system. As you continue to discuss policy options later this week at the White House summit, ASHP urges you to continue to include several innovative provisions in the House and Senate bills that will improve medication use.

ASHP represents pharmacists who practice in hospitals and health systems. The Society's 35,000 members include pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who practice in a variety of hospital and health-system settings, including inpatient, outpatient, home care, and long-term care, as well as pharmacy students. Pharmacists in hospitals and health systems are experts in medication use who serve on interdisciplinary patient-care teams.

Currently, our health care system incurs more than \$177 billion annually in mostly avoidable health care costs to treat adverse events from inappropriate medication use. The proper use of medications becomes even more important as treatment of chronic disease costs the health care system \$1.3 trillion annually, or about 75 cents of every health care dollar. Current health care reform legislation begins to address that problem through the use of innovative delivery reform systems that include pharmacists as integral members of the patient-care team. ASHP believes these provisions will improve the quality of patient care and reduce costs by enabling pharmacists to play an active role in medication therapy by reducing adverse drug events, avoidable hospital readmissions, and helping patients make the best use of their medicines.

The care delivery models that are currently included in both the House and Senate health reform bills utilize the medication-related services of pharmacists in the medical home model, a medication therapy management grant program, and the Independence at Home Act. ASHP believes that the medication-use services of pharmacists are an integral component of a care plan that coordinates a patient's care among all caregivers, including pharmacists. Congress recognized the importance of these provisions and included them in both versions of the bill. We urge you to continue to include these provisions in what emerges from the summit.

ASHP thanks you for your commitment to reforming our nation's health care system, and we look forward to working with you to ensure Americans receive the highest-quality care possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henri R. Manasse, Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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

TOGETHER WE MAKE A GREAT TEAM