

September 13th, 2021

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, Administrator Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Department of Health and Human Services Attn: CMS-1751-P Mail Stop C4-26-05 7500 Security Boulevard Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

# Re: Letter to CMS for Payment Mechanism for Medication Management Services through proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (CMS-1751-P)

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

We are members of the <u>Get the Medications Right Institute (GTMRx)</u>, a multi-stakeholder organization of over 1,400+ members and 900+ companies of payers, providers, and consumers committed to ensuring patients have access to appropriate and personalized use of medications and gene therapies to optimize outcomes and reduce costs (See Addendum A—GTMRx Membership List).

We believe that CMS's strong commitment to advancing value-based care (VBC) in Medicare for 61.7 million enrollees should be a continued focus and is urgently needed to more rapidly expand innovative payment models that will advance patient care services that will optimize medication use through <u>comprehensive medication management (CMM)</u> in practice for advanced primary care and specialty care to ensure better care, lower costs, and higher patient and provider satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> We urge CMS to move rapidly as practices moving toward VBC rely on alternative payment methodologies to drive provider transformation essential in the delivery of new and more effective services.

However, as we transition to VBC, we also urge the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to ensure that today's providers can fully engage all members of the healthcare team, including clinical pharmacists, in patient care. Specifically, we urge CMS to reverse a 2020 policy change limiting physicians to billing only the lowest-level evaluation and management (E/M) code for pharmacistprovided incident-to services, regardless of the duration and complexity of the E/M services provided.<sup>2</sup> This policy shift undermines health system care models that leverage care team members, including clinical pharmacists to support physicians, thereby threatening patient access to critical services, including comprehensive medication management (CMM). CMM is more rigorous in process and purpose, team-based, information-focused, and patient-centric than medication therapy management

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> McFarland MS, Buck ML, Crannage E, Armistead LT, Ourth H, Finks SW, McClurg MR; writing on behalf of the Get the Medications Right Institute. Assessing the Impact of Comprehensive Medication Management on Achievement of the Quadruple Aim. Am J Med. 2021 Apr;134(4):456-461. doi: 10.1016/j.amjmed.2020.12.008. Epub 2021 Jan 17. PMID: 33472055.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Physician Fee Schedule CY 2021 Final Rule, 85 Fed. Reg. 84592-3 (Dec. 28, 2020), *available at* <u>https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-12-28/pdf/2020-26815.pdf</u> (Limiting physicians supervising pharmacist-provided incident-to services to billing code 99211 for those services, despite the fact that many of the services provided by pharmacists meet the complexity and duration criteria set forth for code 99212-14).

(MTM), which is typically provided under Part D. CMM is an enhanced level of service that is provided through team-based care supported via collaborative practice agreements<sup>3</sup> and/or credentialing, and privileging procedures to allow non-physician providers to be officially designated as members of the medical staff.

As an important member of the patient care team at hospitals, health systems, clinics, and physician practices across the nation, today's clinical pharmacists provide team-based care in both the inpatient and outpatient setting. Clinical pharmacists collaborate with physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals to ensure safe and effective medication use and improve patient health outcomes while reducing workload burdens on physicians and other clinical staff.<sup>4,5</sup> Working in collaborative practice with physicians, they educate patients and their caregivers about medications, monitor drug therapy, and coordinate communication between patients, insurers, and interdisciplinary specialty providers.

Drug therapy is involved in 76% of physician office visits and is the sole treatment for many acute and chronic conditions. Problems associated with medication use, such as non-adherence, polypharmacy, errors and adverse events, result in 500,000 emergency room visits and 100,000 hospitalizations yearly, costing the health system over an estimated five billion dollars.<sup>6</sup> Clinical pharmacists' management of medication therapy has been shown to improve transitions of care and reduce hospital readmissions.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, the CMS E/M policy change significantly undervalues the critical role of clinical pharmacists in providing medication management services to Medicare beneficiaries. The CMS E/M policy change is fundamentally at odds with efforts to implement care models that include clinical pharmacists. Many commercial payers as well as states recognize and acknowledge pharmacists to be qualified health professionals (QHPs) whose services can be billed incident-to a physician using the higher-level E/M codes. The American Medical Association (AMA) CPT Code Book also recognizes pharmacists as QHPs eligible to "report services." Indeed, CMS issues National Provider Identifier numbers to pharmacists for just this reason. Pharmacists and pharmacies can bill using their NPI number for immunizations and pharmacists can bill Diabetic Self-Management Training (DSMT) and Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program services if they meet the requirements for these services.

CMS' policy preventing hospitals, health systems, clinics, and physician practices from billing for clinical pharmacist services provided incident to a physician service serves as an unnecessary barrier to broader adoption of innovative team-based care that enhances quality care for our patients. Nonoptimized medication use contributes to an estimated 275,689 deaths per year and cost \$528.4 billion annually.<sup>8</sup> CMM, provided by an interprofessional team to include the clinical pharmacist, is an important tool to improve these outcomes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Under collaborative practice agreements (CPAs), clinical pharmacists are able to add, modify, and discontinue medications; order lab tests; and monitor medication regimes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> McFarland MS, Nelson J, Ourth H, Groppi J and Morreale A. Optimizing the primary care clinical pharmacy specialist: Increasing patient access and quality of care within the Veterans Health Administration. J Am Coll Clin Pharm. 2020;3:494-500.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Funk K, Pestka D, McClurg MR, Carroll J, Sorensen T. Primary Care Providers Believe that Comprehensive Medication Management Improves their Work-Life. Journal of American Board of Family Medicine. 2019; 32(4): 462-473. doi: 10.3122/jabfm.2019.04.180376.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Budnitz DS, Pollock DA, Weidenbach KN, et al. National surveillance of emergency department visits for outpatient adverse drug events. JAMA. 2006;296:1858-1866; *See also* Ni, W., Colayco, D., Hashimoto, J.,Komoto, K., Gowda, C., Wearda, B., McCombs, J. Budget Impact Analysis of a Pharmacist Provided Transition of Care Program. Journal of Managed Care & Specialty Pharmacy. Feb 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Budlong, H, Brummel, A, Rhodes, A, Nici, H. Impact of Comprehensive Medication Management on Hospital Readmission Rates. Population Health Management 2018. 21(5): 395-400.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Watanabe JH, McInnis T, Hirsch JD. Cost of Prescription Drug–Related Morbidity and Mortality. Annals of Pharmacotherapy 2018, Vol. 52(9) 829–837.

Reversing the 2020 E/M policy change and allowing hospitals, health systems, clinics, and physician practices to bill for the services provided by the clinical pharmacists on their care teams, incident to a physician, would help ensure our patients have access to the best possible medication management. Barring a full reversal of the policy change, we urge CMS to adopt either a clinical pharmacist modifier for existing E/M codes or a new clinical pharmacist-specific code set that corresponds to the higher-level E/M codes and accounts for the duration and complexity of pharmacist-provided incident-to services.

We look forward to working with you to implement regulations that allow hospitals, health systems, clinics, and physician practices to fully integrate and reimburse care team members providing CMM to optimize patient outcomes.

Sincerely,

Kathener L. Capper

Katherine Herring Capps Co-Founder & Executive Director GTMRx Institute 8230 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 420 Vienna, VA 22182 Office: 703-394-5398 Cell: 571-276-3116

<u>CC:</u>

Elizabeth Fowler, Ph.D., J.D. Deputy Administrator and Director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation The Hubert H. Humphery Building Room 301H-02 Mail Stop: WB-06-05 200 Independence Ave., S.W. Washington, DC 20001



## Addendum A: GTMRx Membership List

#### **Funding Board Members:**

American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Johnson and Johnson

# **Executive Members:**

California Chronic Care Coalition (CCCC) Kaiser Permanente Tabula Rasa HealthCare Veterans' Health Administration

## **Strategic Partners:**

AACP	Coalition of State	Kimber Boothe
AbbVie	Rheumatology Organizations	LabCorp
AMGEN	(CSRO)	NAHCP
Association of Accessible	Cureatr	OneOme
Medications	EmpiRx	PhactMI
Avera Health	Genentech	Teachers Retirement System
Breast Cancer Index	Genomind	of Kentucky
Cleveland Clinic	Journal of Precision Medicine	

# **Employer Coalition Signing Members:**

Dallas/Fort Worth Business Group on Health Florida Alliance for Healthcare Purchasers Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value Great Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health HealthCare 21 Business Coalition Pittsburgh Business Group on Health Mid-America Coalition on Health Care Midwest Business Group on Health Nevada BGH/Nevada Health Partners Pacific Business Group on Health

#### Partial list our 1400+ Signing Members:

Abbvie(§) Abington Jefferson Health Accenture ActiveRADAR, Inc. **Advanced Primary Care** Strategies Advocacy Options LLC Advocate Medical Group and Midwestern University AegisOne Rx Affinia Health Network Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Aledade All In Solutions Allergy & Asthma Network Allergy Partners Alliance for Integrated **Medication Management** American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) American Association of **Colleges of Pharmacy** (AACP)(§)American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP)(†) American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)(†)Ameshi Management Service Inc. Amgen(§) Anchor Medical Antaean Apexus APhA **Apple Discount Drugs** APRx Aramark **Arcuris Consulting** ArdentCare Solutions Arine Arxcel AscellaHealth Ascension Medical Group Ascension Seton

Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) Atlantic Health System Atrium Health Auburn University, Harrison School of Pharmacy Aurum Diagnostics, LLC **Avalon Behavioral Health** Solutions, LLC Avera Health Avera Heart Hospital Avera Institute for Human Genetics Avera McKennan Hospital Ballad Health **Baptist Health** Baptist Health Louisville Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville **Baylor University Medical** Center Belmont University College of Pharmacy Benefis Health System Beth Israel Lahey Health **BetterMyMeds** Beverly Hills Institute for **Precision Medicine Bingo Dynamic Lifesaver Biopharma Advisors BJC Medical Group & ACO** Blue Thorn Inc **Board of Pharmacy Specialties Boston Medical Center** Breast Cancer Index(§) Brigham and Women's Hospital BRKINS **BT Pharmacy Consulting LLC** Butler University, College of **Pharmacy & Health Sciences** California Chronic Care Coalition(\*) California Society of Health System Pharmacists Carekinesis

Campbell's Pharmacy Cantu's Pharmacy **Capacity Strategies** Capita Consulting Capitol Advocacy & Government Affairs, LLC Capstone Healthcare Alliance Cardiomedix Cardiovascular Services Care Accountability Inc. Caretuit Carilion Giles Community Hospital Catalyst Enterprises LLC Catholic Health Services of Long Island CB Pharmacy Consulting, LLC CCI consulting CDC via IHRC CDPHP Cedars-Sinai Centene Central Care & Anti-Aging Center for Medication Optimization Center for Quality Medication Management at the University of Florida Chapman University School of Pharmacy CHC Health **CHESS Health Solutions** Chicago College of Pharmacy, Midwestern University Children's of Alabama Children's Health Chiro To Go **CHRISTUS Health** CHWP Cisco Systems, Inc. City Dermatology and Laser **Cleveland Clinic Main** Campus Clinical and Translational Genome Research Institute of Southern California University of Health Sciences

**Clinical Pharmacy Systems** Inc **Collaborative Rx Outcomes** LLC College of Pharmacy, Qatar University College of Psychiatric and **Neurologic Pharmacists Colorado Pharmacists Society Communication Prescription**, LLC Community Health and Wellness Partners **Community Health Network** Consana LLC Consult A Pharmacist, LLC **Coriell Life Sciences CPESN** lowa **CPS** Telepharmacy CrossBridge Health CSS Health **CURA Strategies** Cureatr **Custom Design Benefits** CVS **CXJ** Consulting **Dallas-Fort Worth Business** Group on Health **Daviess Community Hospital** DCH Health System **Deaconess Hospital Department of Veterans** Affairs(\*) **Desert Oasis Healthcare Diamond S Ranch Digital Health Space Doylestown Health Drake University** DRx Consulting LLC Duke-Margolis Center for **Health Policy Duke University Health** System e.neves Consultoria East Tennessee State University Academic Health Sciences Center / College of Pharmacy Eastern State Hospital

Eccrine Systems, Inc eHealth Initiative Elder Care Pharmacy Consultants, LLC Elite Pharmacy Consulting, LLC Elon University **Emerging Therapies** Solutions Emerson Hospital **Employers' Advanced** Cooperative on Healthcare **Ensign Services Entree Health Envision Genomics** ePharma PBM do Brasil SA Epic Everyone Matters, Inc. Excelicare Executive Kings, Inc. **Executive Pharmacy** Consulting Services, Inc Fairleigh Dickinson University School of Pharmacy & Health Sciences **Fairview Pharmacy Services** FAWKS Company Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi Ferris State University COP First Databank First Impact Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value Fortech Franciscan Health **Fresenius Medical Care** Frondedge HC **Gateway Health Plan Geisinger Health System** GenelQ Genentech(§) Genet-Rx Genome Creative GenXys Health Care Systems GeriatRx **Geritom Medical** Ghost Systems, Inc. Global Health Care, LLC

**Global Health Strategies Gold Strike Findings Grand Valley State** University, Physician Assistant Studies Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health Gynecologic Care with Janice Lyon MD SC **Great Plains QIN** Harding University College of Pharmacy Harps Food Stores, Inc. Health Care Education and Training, Inc. Health Intelligence Partners **Health2 Resources** Healthcare 21 (H21) Healthcare Quality Strategies Inc. HealthPartners Institute HealthTeamWorks Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY (HOA) HG Pharmacist HIE of One **High Point University Highland Hospital High Touch Health** Hillside Chronic Care Management **Hinsdale Pharmacy** Associates, Inc. Hinshaw & Associates Houston Methodist Health System **HVH Analytics** IBM Watson Health Idaho State University IDDI i-Health Illinois Pharmacists Association Illuminate Health Independent Colleges and **Universities Benefits** Association, Inc. Indiana University Health Indian Health Service

Indian Pharmaceutical Association inGENEious RX Innovaccer InnovaRx **Innovative Healthcare** Consulting Innovatix InsightGx LLC Inspera Health **INTEGRIS Medical Group** Invitae Iowa Healthcare Collaborative **IPhA-PSMP IPRO** Isetts Consulting, LLC **ITSAN** – International Topical Steroid Awareness Network **IU Health** J&J(†) Jerry H. Hodge School of **Pharmacy Texas Tech University Health Sciences** Center JPS Health Network Just Better Medicine **Pharmacy Solutions** Kailos Genetics, Inc. Kaiser Permanente(\*) Kaiser Permanente Colorado Kelly Diabetes Associates, LLC **Kennedy Pharmacy** Innovation Center, UofSC College of Pharmacy Kevin Marvin Consulting LLC Labcorp(§) Laboratory Medicine and Pathology Advisors Lantana Pharmacy Larkin University College of Pharmacy Laurel Senior Living Communities Lipscomb University College of Pharmacy Loma Linda University, School of Pharmacy

Lee Health **Luminus Diagnostics** Lehigh Valley Health Network Main at Locust Pharmacy and Medical Supplies Managed Healthcare Resources, Inc. Manatee Memorial Hospital Manchester University Mann-Grandstaff Veterans Affairs Medical Center Marie Savard, MD Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science Matheus BD Connections, LLC MCG McQuone Consulting **MD** Resources MedAllies MedAware MedCentre PLLC Medical Risk Managers Medication Call Reminder MedicationXpert, corp. Medigenics Consulting LLC Medisafe MediSync Medplus Solutions MedsPLUS Consulting MedTek21 Solutions **MedWatchers** Mercer University College of Pharmacy Mercy Health Mercyone Waterloo Medical Center Mid-America Coalition on Health Care Midwest Business Group on Health Midwestern University **Glendale College of** Pharmacy **Missouri Pharmacogenomics** Consulting Mobile MediClaim, Inc. ModRN Health

Monument Health, LLC MorningStar Actuarial Consulting, LLC Mountain Area Health Education Center Mountain Health CO-OP **MyMeds** Nasr City Cancer Center National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions(§) National Hemophilia Foundation National Pharmaceutical Council Navigant, Inc Nebraska Medicine Nevada Business Group on Health New Directions Behavioral Health, LLC New Directions Technology Consulting, LLC NewHealth Collaborative; Summa Health **New Jersey Poison** Information and Education Services **Nokomis Fiduciary** Northeastern University School of Pharmacy Northeast Ohio Medical Universitv Novant Health Nurse Advocate NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health OCAPS Ohio College of Clinical Pharmacy Advocacy Committee Omicare Omnicell **On Call Healthcare LLC** OneOme(§) **OnlyYOU® Options MD Optum Health Services** 

**Orange Regional Medical** Center OYES LLC Pacific Business Group on Health Pacific University Oregon School of Pharmacy Palm Beach Atlantic University, School of Pharmacy Panacea BioMatx, Inc Park Nicollet Health Services Parker Adventist Hospital Partners Pharmacy Penn Presbyterian Medical Center Perfect Planet, LLC. Pharma-Care, Inc. Pharmaceutical Care **Options**, LLC PharmaLead Consulting Pharmazam, LLC PharmD Live PharmEcology Services, WMSS PharMerica **Physician Health Partners** PIH Health Hospital – Downey PipelineRx Pittsburgh Business Group on Health **Point-of-Care Partners** Prefeitura Municipal de Belo Horizonte **Preventive Plus** Prisma Health Proactive Health, Atrium **Psychopharm Solutions LLC PTS Diagnostics QRxConsults LLC Quality Community Health** Care Quest Diagnostics(†) QuickSTAT **Reed Family Pharmacy Reengineering Cancer** Treatm

**Regenstrief Center for** Healthcare Engineering **Retirement Wellness** Strategies **Rexall Pharmacy Group, Inc RHA Health Services** Ritu Suri MD LLC **Riverside University Health** System **RiverStone Health Rochester Regional Health** Rocky Mountain Health Plans **Roosevelt University Rosalind Franklin University** Roseman University **RPRD Diagnostics** Rutgers Pharmacy & Henry J. Austin Health Center rx-Consultant.LLC RxResults Saba and Associates, LLC Salt Lake City Medical Center San Antonio Regional Hospital Sanford Health Santiam Hospital Santosha Health Sarasota Memorial Hospital ScalaMed SCAN Health Plan **Scipher Medicine** Scripta Insights Signature Diabetes Institute (SDI) Simplicity Pharmacy Services and Wellness Center Inc Siouxland Community Health Center SOHO Health South College School of Pharmacy South Dakota State University Southwest General Southwest Montana **Community Health Center** Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System St. Bernards Hospital, Inc.

St. Christopher's Hospital for Children St. Johns University, Long Island University St. Louis College of Pharmacy St. Luke's Rehabiliation Institute St. Mary Medical Center Steward Healthcare Stroke Association Support Network – Ghana SyneRxgy Consulting, LLC Tabula Rasa Health Care(\*) Teachers' Retirement System of Kentucky(§) TeleMedik Texas A&M Rural and **Community Health Institute** Texas A&M University HSC College of Medicine, A&M **Rural and Community Health** Institute Texas Business Group on Health Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy TFG Partners, LLC The FIT PharmD The John Hopkins Hospital The Johns Hopkins Health System The Journal of Precision Medicine(§) The Kimber Boothe Group, LLC(§) The Sab Group The Virtual Nephrologist, INC. Therapy in your home – OT PT ST **Thermo Fisher Scientific** TLJ Health TMAccelerator **Towncrest Pharmacy** Tria Health Trinity Clinical Pharmacy Services

**TriStar Summit Medical** Center TrustCare Health **TS Consulting Services** Umm Al-Qura University UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, Center for **Medication Optimization** UnitedHealthcare Universidade Federal de **Minas Gerais** University at Buffalo University of California Irvine University of California San Diego University of California San Francisco University of Chicago Medicine University of Cincinnati College of Pharmacy University of Colorado University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy University of Florida College of Pharmacy University of Georgia College of Pharmacy University of Hawaii at Hilo; Hawaii Island Family Health Center University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics University of Jordan Hospital University of Kansas University of Kentucky University of Maryland University of Maryland Quality Care Network

University of Medicine Mandalay University of Minnesota University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy University of Missouri Kansas City School of Pharmacy University of Nevada School of Medicine University of New Mexico College of Pharmacy University of North Texas Health Science Center University of Rochester **Medical Center** University of South Australia University of South Carolina University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy, Pharmacotherapy Division University of Texas Rio Grande Valley University of Utah College of Pharmacy University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Pharmacy **UPMC** Western Maryland University School of Pharmacy **Uptown Pharmacy** USAID UTHealth McGovern Medical School VA Medical Center Vanderbilt University Medical Center Vigilance Health Inc. Vintage Consulting Virginia Commonwealth University

Visante, Inc Vizient Vulcan Enterprises LLC Walgreens Walmart WardRx Consulting Washington State University College of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences Watermark Counseling LLC Watson International Consulting LLC Wayne State University College of Pharmacy Webster & Associates, LLC WellScriptEd Consulting Inc. WellWaze, Inc. Wentworth-Douglass Hospital Wesley Healthcare Systems West Coast University Western University of Health Sciences, College of Pharmacy WeWa.life LLC Wilkes University William Carey University School of Pharmacy William Jones RPh, LLC Williamsburg Endocrinology, Inc WilsonValue Drug Store Wolfe's Pharmacy Wolters Kluwer Health W Triplett Consulting LLC Xavier University of Louisiana College of Pharmacy Xeris Pharmaceuticals YouScript Zigna Analytics Züp Medical Services