



TO: Wisconsin State Legislators

FROM: Coalition of Wisconsin Aging & Health Groups

DATE: March 1, 2021

RE: Support LRB 0106/2 to Protect Treatment Affordability for Wisconsin Patients

We, the undersigned non-profit advocacy organizations, who represent Wisconsin consumers, patients with chronic and complex conditions, and the physicians who care for them, are dedicated to ensuring that the individuals and patients we serve and more can maintain affordable access to the medically necessary medications and treatments they rely on to manage their health and well-being.

We urge you to join Senator André Jacque and add your name in support of LRB 0106/2 relating to the application of prescription drug payments for health care coverage. This bill is not a health insurance mandate, but simply ensures that the copay assistance programs patients use to afford their medications count toward their out-of-pocket cost responsibility while giving Wisconsin insurers plan design flexibility.

Patients in Wisconsin – many of your constituents – who live with epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, and other complex conditions depend on consistent access to the appropriate treatments to manage their health and overall quality of life. As plans increasingly utilize tiered formularies, deductibles, and coinsurance to manage benefits, patients are responsible for a greater share of their drug costs. Many of these patients rely on copay assistance programs from manufacturers and nonprofits to afford these

medications. When patients cannot afford their medication, they often skip doses, do not use their medications appropriately, or stop treatment altogether. Multiple studies have shown that patients are more likely to abandon their treatment when out-of-pocket costs increase, which can actually lead to increased costs in other parts of the healthcare system, as patients visit the ER, require doctor's visits, and lose control of their disease.ⁱ

Unfortunately, nothing stops health insurance companies in Wisconsin from instituting policies that don't count copay assistance coupons, vouchers, and discount cards toward a patient's out-of-pocket responsibility. In this scenario, patients face the "copay surprise" when their copay assistance runs out and are faced with a choice: pay steep out-of-pocket costs for their medication or abandon their therapy.

While nearly 90% of all prescription drugs dispensed in the United States are genericsⁱⁱ, many patients who utilize copay assistance programs to manage complex medical conditions have limited treatment options and do not have access to generic alternatives. A study of claims data by IQVIA found that 99.6% of copay cards are used for branded drugs that do NOT have a generic alternative.ⁱⁱⁱ

Consistent and affordable access to prescription medications has become even more critical for vulnerable patients who are experiencing the health and economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever before, it is critical that Wisconsin legislators do everything in their power to help constituents afford and access the medications they need to stay safe and healthy.

We commend Sen. Jacque for leading this effort to protect patients in Wisconsin from rising out-of-pocket costs and encourage you to join him in supporting LRB 0106/2.

Sincerely,

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging & Health Groups
Allergy & Asthma Network
Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Chapter
American Association of Clinical Urologists, Inc. (AACU)
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)
American Diabetes Association (ADA)
American Kidney Fund (AKF)
American Medical Association (AMA)
Arthritis Foundation
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Community Liver Alliance (CLA)
Gaucher Community Alliance (GCA)
Great Lakes Hemophilia Foundation
Hemophilia Federation of America (HFA)
HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute (HIV+Hep)
Infusion Access Foundation (IAF)
International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis (AiArthritis)
Little Hercules Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc. (LADA)
Medical Topics Unlimited
National Eczema Association (NEA)

National Infusion Center Association (NICA)
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF)
Prevent Blindness Wisconsin
Pulmonary Hypertension Association (PHA)
Sixteen Street Community Health Centers
Vivent Health
Wisconsin Association of Hematology and Oncology (WAHO)
Wisconsin Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (WAOPS)
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA)
Wisconsin Rheumatology Association

For questions or more information, please contact Rob Gundermann, President and CEO of the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging and Health Groups (gundermann@cwaq.org).

ⁱ https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28439/w28439.pdf?utm_campaign=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_medium=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_source=PANTHEON_STRIPPED

ⁱⁱ https://accessiblemeds.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/AAM-Generic-Brand-Drug-Supply-Chain-Brief.pdf?_ga=2.207112400.298263904.1613756690-201409448.1613756690

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.iqvia.com/locations/united-states/library/fact-sheets/evaluation-of-co-pay-card-utilization>