

NEWS RELEASE

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NCPA Offers Recommendations for Health Care Entitlement Reform as Congress Grapples With Debt Challenges

Alexandria, Va. (June 23, 2011) The [National Community Pharmacists Association](http://www.ncpanet.org/) (NCPA) today [submitted testimony](http://www.ncpanet.org/pdf/leg/june11/ncpasfctestimony.pdf) (<http://www.ncpanet.org/pdf/leg/june11/ncpasfctestimony.pdf>) for the U.S. Senate Finance Committee's "Hearing on Health Care Entitlements: The Road Forward," where key stakeholders and health care providers offered recommendation for responsibly reining in the costs of federal health programs like Medicare and Medicaid in the face of growing federal deficit concerns. NCPA focused on combating wasteful spending and capitalizing on proven cost-saving measures through legislation that focused on:

- Increasing the appropriate utilization of lower cost generic prescription drugs, which community pharmacists dispense more often than other providers, such as mail order;
- Changing the government fight against fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid from a policy of costly administrative regulations for pharmacies to focusing on capturing and punishing the bad actors;
- Expanding Medication Therapy Management in Medicare Part D to help reduce the estimated \$290 billion in health care spending due to the improper or ineffective use of medication;
- Increasing transparency of the brand name prescription drug manufacturer rebates retained by pharmacy benefit managers, which would allow the federal government to recoup billions of uncollected dollars;
- Restricting the mandated or incentivized use of wasteful mail order pharmacies that lead to excess supplies of prescription drugs, which are more likely to be of the expensive brand name variety; and
- Preserving patient access to Medicare Part B diabetes testing supplies and counseling from independent community pharmacists.

"Everyone is justifiably concerned with the ballooning costs of Medicare, Medicaid and other federal health programs," said NCPA Executive Vice President and CEO B. Douglas Hoey, RPh, MBA. "NCPA fully supports the Senate Finance Committee's efforts to find meaningful solutions for eliminating waste and generating more savings, without undermining patient care. Community pharmacist small business owners stand ready to help. However, those outcomes will be more likely if community pharmacists, with their clinical expertise, patient-focused approach, and understanding of the shortcomings of how prescription drug benefits are managed."

Hoey added, “Our testimony calls for more choice and pharmacy competition, increased access to cost-saving pharmacist counseling and reforms the practices of major PBMs that have triggered consistent claims of fraud and deceptive conduct. By passing the *Pharmacy Competition and Consumer Choice Act*, the *Medication Therapy Management Empowerment Act*, and the *Medicare Diabetes Access to Care Act*, Congress can bend the cost curve downward without sacrificing care for millions of Americans.”

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The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA®) represents the interests of America's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 23,000 independent community pharmacies, pharmacy franchises, and chains. Together they represent a \$93 billion health-care marketplace, have more than 315,000 employees including 62,400 pharmacists, and dispense over 41% of all retail prescriptions. To learn more go to www.ncpanet.org or read NCPA's blog, The Dose, at <http://ncpanet.wordpress.com>.