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Roberts, Hagan Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Help Seniors and Lower Health Care Costs

Bill expands preventive program that helps seniors manage their medication

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Kay Hagan (D-NC) and Pat Roberts (R-KS) today introduced commonsense legislation that will lower health care costs by helping more seniors better manage their prescriptions. The Medication Therapy Management (MTM) Empowerment Act will allow seniors with any high-cost chronic illness to review all their medication and develop a plan of action with a pharmacist.

“Expanding this already successful program is a commonsense, fiscally responsible way to improve seniors’ health and reduce preventable trips to the hospital,” said Hagan. “MTM programs save lives and have already saved tens of millions of dollars in North Carolina alone. I urge my colleagues to join me and Senator Roberts to pass this bipartisan bill that will keep our seniors healthy and reduce health care costs.”

“We have recognized the value of pharmacists in the health system for many years. They are especially valuable for our Kansas communities, and can sometimes be the only health provider in our rural towns.” said Roberts. “MTM is an important tool in the pharmacists tool box for many patients but which can be critical for those suffering from chronic conditions. The Medication Therapy Management Empowerment Act gives patients access to valuable counseling and management for their conditions, and takes the essential steps to guarantee what we already know: that MTM will save the system money while providing higher quality care for patients. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.”

Currently Medicare Part D Plans are only required to offer MTM coverage plans to beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions. The MTM Empowerment Act allows seniors with only one high cost chronic condition, such as diabetes, hypertension, or asthma to access MTM services.

The bill includes strong safeguards to ensure that expanding access to MTM in Medicare will not increase spending but actually save money. Language in the bill stipulates that before seniors with one high-cost chronic condition may see a qualified provider for a comprehensive medication review, the Chief Actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) must certify that the program will lower spending. And, five years after implementation, the Chief Actuary must certify that the program actually did lower spending. Although all current evidence indicates that increased access to MTM services lowers overall health care spending for participating patients, if the Chief Actuary finds that the program did not lower spending, then the Secretary of Health and Human Services must review whether to continue the program for seniors with one high-cost chronic condition.

