

May 25, 2011

To: All NRLN Grassroots Network Members  
From: NRLN President Bill Kadereit  
Subject: NRLN Action Alert: Join the U.S. House Congressional Affordable Medicines Caucus

A few days ago, U.S. Representatives Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO) and Peter Welch (D-VT) founded the Congressional Affordable Medicines Caucus with the hope that the bipartisan group will produce legislation that leads to the wider use of less expensive generic drugs and reduce the growth of health care spending.

I am asking you to send the NRLN's sample letter (copy below) to your Representative to urge him or her to join the caucus if he or she has not already done so.

Go to <http://capwiz.com/abtr/home/> to access the NRLN Action Alert. Look for the Action Alert headline: JOIN THE U.S. HOUSE CONGRESSIONAL AFFORDABLE MEDICINES CAUCUS. Click on the "Take Action" button. On the next screen, type in your zip code and click "GO" to identify your Representatives and access the sample letter. Personalize the letter with your own comments. If you have a problem accessing the Action Alert with the above link, go to <http://www.nrln.org> and click on the "Take Action Now" headline at the top of the NRLN website's home page. Send your email today.

It would also help to visit your Representative's local office or call the Washington, DC or state/district office. Use the information in the sample letter to ask him or her to join the Congressional Affordable Medicines Caucus. Go to <http://capwiz.com/abtr/dbq/officials/> to access the NRLN website to find your Representative's offices and phone numbers.

We need the support of all of our Grassroots Network members and we need you to encourage your friends to sign up as Grassroots Network members at <http://capwiz.com/abtr/mlm/signup/>. Not only do we need you and your friends to email letters to Washington and talk with your members of Congress, we also need your financial support through an individual member contribution of \$25, \$50, \$75 or more. Any amount you can contribute will be appreciated. You may make your check or money order payable to **NRLN, Inc.** and mail it along with the Membership Contribution Form at: <http://www.nrln.org/printad.htm>. Or, you may make your contribution online with your credit card on the NRLN website at <http://www.nrln.org> by clicking on the "Memberships" icon at the top of the home page and selecting the "Support the NRLN" link.

Bill Kadereit, President  
National Retiree Legislative Network

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Sample Letter:

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_

I was pleased to learn from the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) that the Congressional Affordable Medicines Caucus has been formed in the U.S. House of Representatives to garner bipartisan support to make prescription drugs more affordable and rein in the ever-increasing cost of health care. If you are not yet a member of this caucus, I urge you to join and help in this effort.

Among the objectives of the caucus is to increase the use of less expensive generic prescription drugs and expand the Food and Drug Administration's capability for approving generic drugs. The caucus may support importing FDA-approved drugs from outside the U.S. to reduce health care costs.

When you join the bipartisan caucus, as I hope you will, please work to introduce in the House companion bills for three prescription drug bills pending in the U.S. Senate. Those bills are:

**S. 27, Preserve Access to Affordable Generics Act** would (1) enhance competition in the pharmaceutical market by stopping anticompetitive agreements between brand name and generic drug manufacturers; and (2) support the purpose and intent of antitrust laws by prohibiting anticompetitive practices in the pharmaceutical industry that harm consumers.

**S. 44, Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2011** would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to negotiate with pharmaceutical manufacturers the prices that may be charged to Medicare Part D prescription drug plans and Medicare Advantage plans.

**S. 319: Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2011** would allow U.S.-licensed pharmacies and drug wholesalers to import medications from FDA-approved countries where drug costs are 35 to 55 percent lower and pass along the savings to American customers. The legislation would also allow individual consumers to purchase prescription drugs for their own personal use from safe, reliable, FDA-inspected Canadian pharmacies.

I endorse the NRLN's past support for the introduction of these three bills plus the NRLN's desire for legislation to staff and fund the FDA to reduce generic drug approval backlogs. The funding of FDA to support faster licensing of generic drugs and conducting adequate inspections for importation of medicine would increase competition in the marketplace and would help not only retirees but all consumers, as well as bring down costs which are unnecessarily adding to the federal deficit. The NRLN projects that if Congress acted to implement all of the above initiatives, including competitive bidding by HHS, that 18% or \$630 billion of the nation's \$3.6 trillion in projected prescription drug expenditures over the next ten (10) years can be saved.

Passing legislation to address the cost of prescription drugs—a major contributor to high health care costs—should be non-political, cutting across party lines, without regard for opposition from the brand-name pharmaceutical industry that has a stranglehold on Americans.

Your joining this caucus and supporting these bills to reduce the cost of prescription drugs would be a definitive step toward making prescription drugs affordable for America's seniors who so desperately need them. Reining in the ever-increasing cost of health care is the best way to reduce the cost of Medicare and to keep the covenant with those who paid taxes monthly so they could receive promised Medicare plan benefits. Taking this action would go a long way toward making Medicare financially sound and be a positive step toward solving America's economic dilemma.

Sincerely,