October 30, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar III  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Support Safety-Net Providers and the 340B Drug Pricing Program

Dear Secretary Azar:

Congress created the 340B drug pricing program to support safety-net providers, treat patients in need, and offer vital services. For more than 25 years, the 340B program has supported the safety-net and made sure it is intact for people living with chronic medical and mental health conditions. As COVID-19 plagues America, increased poverty rates remain a stark reality for patients who depend on safety-net providers. Additionally, many of the communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic already face disproportionate health care barriers. Equitable health care is especially critical.

As a health community, we are deeply concerned about some pharmaceutical manufacturers’ recent actions to limit access to discounted prices for certain prescription drugs purchased by safety-net hospitals, health centers, and clinics. These covered entities serve people living with low incomes and who reside in underserved rural communities.

Threats to the safety net are concerning stakeholders representing the patient, provider, consumer, and social justice organizations’ needs. Actions that limit access to prescription drugs purchased by safety-net hospitals, health centers, and clinics will harm communities of color, low-income, and rural populations. This further divides and disproportionately impacts racially and ethnically diverse communities.

Amid a global pandemic and recession, Medicaid and 340B are more critical than ever before, providing essential resources for providers who treat patients with the greatest health care needs. A strong safety net includes preserving Medicaid and protecting the 340B drug pricing program. As the number of uninsured Americans continues to rise, this is not the time to inflict financial harm on safety-net providers.

Please use your legal authority to stop unlawful actions that deny discounted drug pricing to hospitals and other covered entities before they cause irreparable damage to the safety net and compromise resources needed for patient care.

Sincerely,

Advocates
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<td>Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces</td>
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CC:  Thomas J. Engels  
Administrator  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  

Rear Admiral Krista Pedley  
Director, Office of Pharmacy Affairs  
Health Resources and Services Administration