



April 22, 2009

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Chairman, Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Vitter
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mel Martinez
Ranking Member, Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Schumer, Collins, Stabenow, Brown, Shaheen, Vitter and Martinez,

We, the undersigned consumer, patient and public health groups and unions, are pleased to endorse the bipartisan *Promoting Innovation and Access to Life-Saving Medicine Act* (S. 726). This important bill will create a much-needed pathway for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of safe, effective and affordable biogenerics. Your proposal will result billions of dollars of cost savings for individual patients, insurers, and national and state government programs. At a time when health care costs are spiraling out of control and health care reform is an urgent priority, the time is ripe for action.

There is a lot at stake in crafting biogenerics legislation. Biologic drugs -- including key treatments for cancer, diabetes, heart disease, MS and autoimmune disorders like arthritis -- are the fastest growing part of the nation's prescription drug bill. By 2010 it is estimated that 50% of all new drug approvals will be biologics. At the same time, brand-name biologic drugs are priced significantly higher on average than brand-name conventional pharmaceuticals, heightening the need for generics. In some cases, prices approach or exceed \$100,000 per patient, per year. Biologics priced at tens of thousands of dollars per patient per year are commonplace. In 2006, the five top-selling biologic drugs alone constituted 30 percent of Medicare Part B spending. These prices make it very difficult and sometimes impossible for large numbers of Americans to gain access to the most cutting edge life-saving treatments.

Of course, how much consumers will save -- and when -- depends crucially on the details of the new FDA regulatory approval process. Your bill would establish a rational and streamlined pathway for the timely introduction of generic price competition for biologics.

We thank-you for your leadership and look forward to working with you to build support for this essential element of health care reform.

Sincerely,

American Medical Student Association (AMSA)

Breast Cancer Action

Consumers Union

Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO

Essential Action

Knowledge Ecology International (KEI)

National Legislative Association on Prescription Drug Prices (NLARx)

National Women's Health Network

Public Citizen

Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM)

U.S. PIRG (Public Interest Research Group)

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