

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 21, 2022

Lieutenant General Ronald J. Place
Director
Defense Health Agency
7700 Arlington Boulevard
Suite 5101
Falls Church, VA 22042-5101

Dear Lieutenant General Place,

We write today with grave concerns about the impact our service members, military retirees, children, and many others are facing with the Defense Health Agency's (DHA) decision to proceed with Cigna/Express Scripts Inc. (ESI) TRICARE 2023 pharmacy network contract, despite the probable removal of approximately 15,000 pharmacies and likely only one remaining specialty pharmacy in the network, which is ESI's own specialty pharmacy. Even though we understand that ESI is offering these pharmacies the opportunity to re-join the network, if contract terms remain the same as the first offer, pharmacies will likely be forced to remain out of the network.

DHA's decision has come at the expense of small businesses, independent community pharmacies, specialty pharmacies, long-term care pharmacies, and most importantly the beneficiaries they serve. As you know, Cigna/Express Scripts notified certain pharmacies and beneficiaries that their current 2022 TRICARE pharmacy contracts would expire two months ahead of schedule, on October 24, 2022, rather than at the end of the year. This leaves patients, including those with cancer and rare diseases, with the impossible choice of either switching to a new and often far away pharmacy or paying high out-of-pocket costs to stay with their established pharmacy. This no way to treat our service members and their families.

In addition to our concerns about DHA reducing access to care for TRICARE beneficiaries, we have also heard additional concerns from TRICARE beneficiaries who are being directed to pharmacies that either do not exist or are closed. Patients losing access to quality care and then being misdirected to the wrong pharmacy will further impact health outcomes and increase costs for taxpayers. This decision by Cigna/Express Scripts will strip pharmaceutical access away from TRICARE beneficiaries and their families, particularly those in rural communities and those who rely on specialty pharmacies to remain compliant with their prescribed drug regimen. Our constituents will no longer able to rely upon their pharmacy of choice to access medically necessary medications and will be forced to drive long distances to find in-network retail pharmacies. Members of the military and their families deserve better.

Children's hospitals have also expressed grave concerns about their ability to discharge their pediatric patients in a timely and safe manner because families will not have immediate access to the medications they need, including home infusions, as a result of these recent TRICARE changes. Flexibility in contracting to include the hospitals' specialty pharmacies, community-based home infusion pharmacies, or other community and independent pharmacies

are necessary to meet children's unique needs.

This decision will severely impact those who serve or have served our country honorably by reducing TRICARE patients' access to quality health care at a time when many receive annual vaccinations. We continue to hear from pharmacists and patients expressing concerns about these changes. It is our responsibility to ensure that their access to affordable, quality health care is not hindered. To ensure DHA has greater visibility on the impact of this change, we write to request your attendance in a listening session with impacted stakeholders, Members, and staff on December 7, 2022.

Due to the patient access and safety concerns, we look forward to your attendance and working with you to ensure TRICARE beneficiaries continue to receive the utmost quality care. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



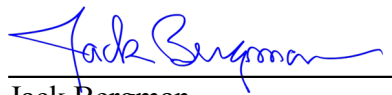
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Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Joe Wilson
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Vicky Hartzler
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Austin Scott
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Mo Brooks
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Ronny L. Jackson, M.D.
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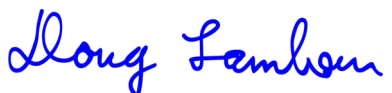
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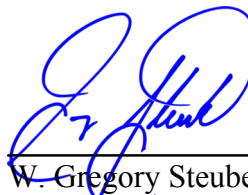
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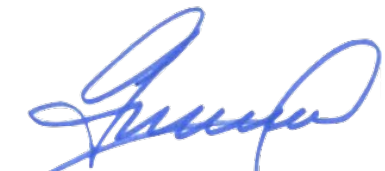
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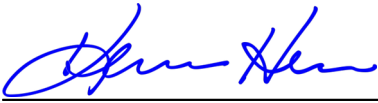
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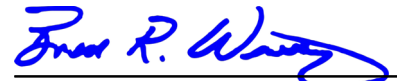
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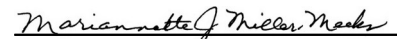
Diana Harshbarger
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Member of Congress



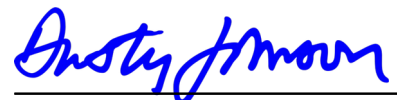
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