

MIKE JOHNSON

4TH DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION,
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AND THE INTERNET

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST,
COMMERCIAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

October 8, 2022

The Honorable Seileen Mullen
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs
Defense Health Agency
7700 Arlington Boulevard
Suite 5101
Falls Church, VA 22042

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Mullen:

I write to express my great concern with recent changes impacting TRICARE beneficiaries' access to retail and community pharmacies. As such, I am requesting information from the Defense Health Agency (DHA) in furtherance of my duties as a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

It has been brought to my attention that Express Scripts has made reductions in reimbursement rates for prescriptions originating from in-network retail pharmacies beginning in 2023. This change will force approximately 15,000 pharmacies to leave the TRICARE network on October 24, 2022 when current pharmacy contracts expire. I am extremely concerned that this abrupt disruption to the TRICARE network will negatively impact millions of beneficiaries, especially those who reside in rural areas with limited options to fulfill their pharmaceutical needs.

As you know, pharmacists are a lynchpin in serving nearly every American's health care requirements. Any lapse in pharmaceutical availability will place tremendous hardship on our nation's servicemembers, their families, and military veterans. I am especially concerned that my extremely rural district, which is home to Barksdale Air Force Base, Fort Polk, and thousands of servicemembers and veterans will be negatively and disproportionately impacted by the departure of pharmacies from the TRICARE network.

Due to the fact that thousands of pharmacies will leave the network on October 24, I respectfully request responses to the below questions as soon as possible.

1. What steps is DHA taking to ensure TRICARE beneficiaries' access to retail pharmacies in light of the departure of thousands of pharmacies on October 24, 2022?
2. How does DHA plan to monitor current and future participation in the TRICARE Pharmacy Program?
3. What justification has Express Scripts provided to DHA regarding the early termination of 2022 pharmacy contracts, and what authority has DHA delegated to Express Scripts to make these changes?

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Thank you in advance for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to working with you in service to our nation's servicemembers and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Johnson" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Johnson
Member of Congress