

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 4, 2022

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

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Mullen,

We write today to express our concern with proposed pharmacy network changes that will cause undue hardship on TRICARE beneficiaries seeking to access care at local community pharmacies. Under a new contract, Express Scripts, the Cigna-owned pharmacy benefit manager that administers the TRICARE benefit on behalf of the Department of Defense, instituted pharmacy network changes that will drastically reduce pharmacy access. The retail network will be reduced by almost 15,000 pharmacies impacting 400,000 TRICARE beneficiaries.

It appears that most of the pharmacies excluded from the network are independent community pharmacies located in underserved rural and urban areas. In addition to independent community pharmacies, major retailers like Wal-Mart will not be in network as options for patients, which may leave some beneficiaries particularly in rural areas with no option at all. On top of that, Cigna/Express Scripts decided to make these changes effective Oct. 24, 2022 after receiving a waiver from the Department of Defense, surprising and confusing patients and pharmacies.

We are also concerned that Cigna/Express Scripts is not treating pharmacies equally. The company has offered more favorable contract terms to some pharmacies and offered other pharmacies contract terms that reimburse well the below acquisition cost and do not include a dispensing fee to other pharmacies. This presents conflicts of interest questions as Express Scripts may be utilizing a government contract and taxpayer dollars to undercut their own pharmacy competition.

We request that DOD provide insight into the reasoning behind these contract changes and request that DOD closely monitor all actions by Cigna/Express Scripts to ensure that access is protected for beneficiaries moving forward. It is unacceptable for our active duty servicemembers, military retirees, and their families to have such limited access to pharmacy care. These servicemembers, retirees, and their families who have sacrificed so much for their country deserve to have dependable medical benefits, including access to the local community pharmacy of their choice. We look forward to your response detailing how the Department will address these troubling issues.

Sincerely,



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



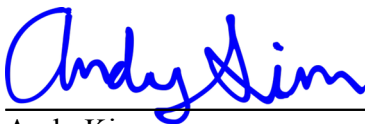
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



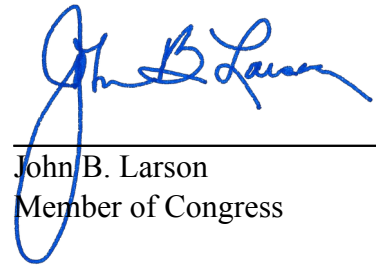
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



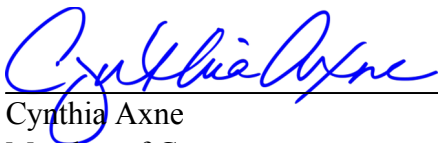
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Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



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Cynthia Axne
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Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



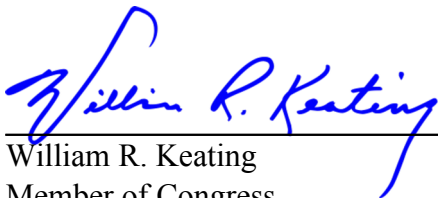
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Vicente Gonzalez
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