

November 7, 2018

The Honorable Karen E. Spilka, Senate President
State House, Room 332
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133
Karen.Spilka@masenate.gov

Dear President Spilka:

Together, we represent tens of thousands of patients in Massachusetts, and we are writing on their behalf to ask the Senate to follow the House and support **H4825 – An Act extending the authorization for the use of certain discount vouchers for prescription drugs**. Your favorable action will extend the sunset provision until 2020, ensuring Massachusetts patients can continue accessing vital co-pay programs for their prescription medications.

Specifically, we are requesting your support on the following amendment:

Governor’s Budget Amendment to Co-Pay Sunset Extension - Attachment G Section 63. Section 226 of chapter 139 of the acts of 2012 is hereby amended by striking out the figure “2019”, inserted by section 129 of chapter 133 of the acts of 2016, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 2020.

Massachusetts patients currently rely on the significant cost-savings co-pay programs provide. Allowing the law to sunset will take away a much-needed resource from thousands of patients who are dealing with complex medical conditions, and undermine the Commonwealth’s stated goal of controlling health care costs.

Your constituents with chronic illnesses often face heartbreaking financial decisions to manage their conditions and, in some cases, stay alive. Pharmacy co-pay assistance eases the financial burden of astronomical out-of-pocket costs (set by health plans and pharmacy benefit managers) that put some patients in unenviable positions of choosing basic life necessities over taking medications as prescribed. Studies show that when patients’ out-of-pocket costs spike, many skip doses or stop taking medication altogether, resulting in higher costs associated with hospitalizations, ER visits, and long-term health issues.

In Massachusetts, thousands of patients have benefited from money-saving co-pay assistance during the past six years. We urge your support so we do not let these patients down by going back to an era when Massachusetts was lagging behind all other states on this critical issue.

In 2012, Gov. Deval Patrick signed legislation making Massachusetts the final state in the country to allow patients to redeem prescription drug discount coupons at pharmacies to lower co-pay costs. Before this legislation, these coupons were worthless in the Commonwealth due to an antiquated 1988 state law that banned any rebate for health-care purchasing. Unfortunately, patients are struggling with the possibility that the use of coupons will sunset in 2019 without legislative action.

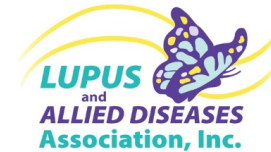
Please support the extension of the existing law's sunset provision on prescription drug discount programs through 2020. We need your help to ensure Massachusetts patients avoid the impossible predicament of making medical decisions based on their finances, compromising their health and well-being in the process.

Thank you for your consideration.

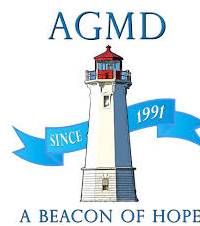
Sincerely,

Arthritis Foundation
Association of Gastrointestinal Motility Disorders
Children with Diabetes
Chronic Disease Coalition
Coalition of State Rheumatology Associations
Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition
Diabetes Sisters
Epilepsy Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation of New England
Family Reach
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Heart Brothers
Lupus Foundation of New England
Massachusetts Association for Mental Health
Men Against Breast Cancer
National Diabetes Volunteer Leadership Council
New England Hemophilia Association
National Organization for Rare Disorders
Patients Rising Now
Susan G. Komen New England

Collectively, we support H4825: An Act extending the authorization for the use of certain discount vouchers for prescription drugs.



ChronicDiseaseCoalition



A BEACON OF HOPE



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