

**Action Alert:**

**Senate Prepares to Vote on Prescription Drug Benefits Bills  
Threatening Role of Supermarket Pharmacies in Medicare**

The U.S. Senate is expected to vote on Tuesday, July 23, on proposals that would place control of the Medicare-related prescription drug program in the hands of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) at the expense of community and supermarket pharmacies. PBMs, which are not qualified to provide patient care services, would be empowered to economically coerce seniors into using mail order, requiring them to pay more to use the trusted, local pharmacist of their choice.

The Senate is expected to vote on S. 812, a relatively uncontroversial bill. While there are positive aspects of S. 812 that N.G.A. supports, such as expanding access to low-cost generic drugs, it is expected that aspects of three other Medicare prescription drug bills could be added. These are the Graham bill, S. 2625, the "Tripartisan" bill, S. 2729, and the Hagel bill, S. 2139. These three bills all contain provisions opposed by N.G.A. and a coalition of groups representing pharmacies because the bills would turn over to unregulated PBMs decision-making power relating to patient care, determining pharmacy payment levels, and switching patients to mail order.

N.G.A. members are urged to contact their senators by calling the U.S. Senate switchboard at (202) 224-3121. Tell them:

- The Medicare prescription drug plans under consideration are bad for pharmacies and bad for seniors.
- Congress should not penalize Medicare-eligible seniors by economically coercing them into using mail order, or requiring them to pay more to use the trusted, local pharmacist of their choice.
- Medicare-eligible seniors should have access to a voluntary, comprehensive pharmacy benefit that covers both prescription medications and the important pharmacy-based medication counseling and education services that help them take their medications properly.

If you have questions, please contact Tom Wenning, N.G.A. Senior Vice President and General Counsel, or Mike Mason, N.G.A. Director of Public Affairs, at (703) 516-0700, or at [publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org](mailto:publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org).

NOTE: Access news releases and other information at the **FSIS** web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Tom Wenning at [publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org](mailto:publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org).

Would you prefer to receive Action and Recall Alerts via e-mail? E-mail us at [publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org](mailto:publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org).

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