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May 14, 2019

The Honorable James P. McGovern
438 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2103

Dear Representative McGovern,

I am writing on behalf of the 25,000 physician, resident and medical student members of the Massachusetts Medical Society in support of HR 987, Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drugs, which includes the CREATES act and other bills designed to prohibit tactics used by some pharmaceutical companies to delay the entry of generic drugs into the market. In addition, HR 987 includes critical provisions to strengthen the Affordable Care Act, including additional funding for health care exchanges and a prohibition on the creation of short-term health plans. We applaud your support for these proposals.

As physicians, we fully recognize the importance of prescription drugs to the health and well-being of the patients we treat. At the same time, we are increasingly frustrated by the rapid and inexplicable increases in the prices of existing drugs, the difficulty of bringing new generic drugs to market as well as the extraordinary high cost of breakthrough drugs, all of which can make life-saving medications unattainable for our patients. We are acutely aware of the impact of the cost of prescription drugs on overall health care spending. According to the 2018 report from the Massachusetts Center for Health Information and Analytics, the price of prescription drugs continues to be the second largest driver of the cost of care in the Commonwealth, increasing growth by 36.5%. For these reasons, the MMS supports a series of policy changes to make drugs more affordable and accessible. We believe the CREATES Act as well as provisions preventing pay for delay tactics are important first steps towards helping our patients access affordable medicine.

As you also know, the MMS is a strong supporter of the ACA and supports this bill's provisions to undue administrative changes which have sought to undermine the law. We oppose the creation of short-term health insurance plans which are exempt from the basic patient protections and essential benefits mandates in the ACA. A recent report from the American Cancer Society modeled the effects of short-term insurance plans in six states on a hypothetical 57-year-old female patient diagnosed with breast cancer and found them "devastatingly inadequate."

The MMS applauds your ongoing support for these and other proposals to make prescription drugs more accessible and affordable and to strengthen the Affordable Care Act. We look forward to continuing our work with you and the Massachusetts Delegation to support access to quality health care for all our patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maryanne C. Bombaugh MD MSc MBA". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maryanne C. Bombaugh, MD, MSc, MBA,
FACOG

cc: Drea Shropshire