

6/25/2008 Moran Announces House Passage of Fixes for Pharmacies, Medical Providers

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Legislation to Improve Medicare Regulations for Patients, Providers

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran this week announced House passage of legislation to improve Medicare regulations for patients and health care providers. Importantly, the bill fixes provisions for pharmacies, an issue Moran has championed since first coming to Congress.

"This legislation includes several important fixes for our health care providers in Kansas, especially our community pharmacists," Moran said. "By making these changes, we will help keep our health care professionals on a level playing field whether they are serving patients in rural or urban areas. This will help keep the doors open to local hospitals, doctor's offices and pharmacies."

The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act, H.R. 6331, requires pharmacies to be reimbursed in a timely manner for prescriptions already dispensed to patients. The bill also delays the implementation of the Average Manufacturing Price payment system, which would reimburse pharmacists for less than what it costs to fill Medicaid prescriptions. Finally, this bill will suspend the current bidding program for Durable Medical Equipment. The current program could compromise Kansans' access to equipment and create more overhead costs for equipment providers. Moran has previously sponsored legislation to address each of these issues.

"It's about the patient," R.Ph. Patrick Hilger, a community pharmacist in Russell, said. "The House has taken a great step toward securing a patient's access to valuable pharmaceutical care from thousands of independent pharmacies across the country."

This legislation also suspends for 18 months a reduction in Medicare payments to physicians, establishes new grants for mental health services to Iraq war veterans in rural areas and begins a demonstration program for integrating care in rural communities.

This month, Moran testified before the House Ways and Means Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee about the disparities in the health care system. Moran co-founded the Congressional Community Pharmacy Caucus and is a member of the Rural Health Care Caucus.

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