

MO GOP Legislator Urged by Physician & Patient Advocacy Organizations to Abandon Plan to Thwart PBM Accountability

JEFFERSON CITY, MO, UNITED STATES, May 12, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today the [Alliance for Transparent and Affordable Prescriptions](#) (ATAP) released a letter sent on behalf of its membership to Eric Burlison, a Missouri State Senator requesting he abandon a plan to allow the pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) industry continue its abusive practices and jeopardize patients. Following up on information that Senator Burlison is planning to filibuster legislation including HB 834 and its companion bill SB 403 this week, concerns in the medical and patient advocacy community are growing – and many are voicing major concerns.



Coalition of Patient Advocates Working to Lower Prescription Drug Costs

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*Dr. Robert Levin, ATAPs
President*

“If successful, Senator Burlison’s filibuster will eliminate accountability on the PBM industry and place upward pressure on prescription drug pricing,” stated Dr. Robert Levin, ATAP President. “For far too long, PBMs generated significant profits while patients struggle to afford the cost of prescription drugs. It is time that elected officials and policymakers see what is really happening in our exam rooms and our patient’s wallets due to PBM interference.”

ATAP has been an active advocate for patients in a variety of federal and state battles to amplify the voices of

patients and physicians.

The letter to Senator Burlison states, in part: “...the Trump administration proposed a rule through Health and Human Services (HHS), that would have eliminated the safe harbor that protects PBM rebates from the federal anti-kickback statute. This awesome proposal would have effectively eliminated the PBM rebate system... Regrettably, the new administration withdrew

this essential patient protection. States can play a central role to ensure that patients are still protected from abusive PBM practices...”

“A light is finally shining on the previously hidden profit motives of the PBM industry. Patients, physicians, and policymakers in Missouri have the power to effect meaningful change if Senator Burlison allows this legislation to be considered fairly,” Dr. Levin continued. “More transparency is desperately needed in the PBM industry, and this legislation provides it. It is truly a mystery why any elected official would prevent such accountability and stand in the way of fair drug prices and patient access to care.”

The full letter to Senator Burlison is below and posted on ATAP's website.

The Honorable Eric Burlison
201 W Capitol Ave., Rm. 221
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

RE:MO HB 834 and SB 403 – Pharmacy Benefit Managers Reporting/Transparency

Dear Senator Burlison:

We are saddened and dismayed to learn of your recent stance regarding Missouri HB 834. We are painfully aware of a planned filibuster to MO HB 834 and its companion bill SB 403.

As you may be aware, Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) are third-party entities that are hired by insurers and health plan sponsors to manage and administer prescription drug benefit plans.

We are very concerned about the role PBMs play regarding the alarming price increases in the total cost and out of pocket costs of prescription drugs for patients, resulting in the loss of patient access to affordable and life-saving medications.

HB 834 will help remedy many of these practices by:

- Ensuring oversight of PBMs by the Dir. of the MO Dept of Commerce and Insurance;
- Allowing for penalties for violations of this statute;
- Providing for reporting of rebates received by PBMs, including – where the rebates are being applied, and reporting of yearly aggregated rebate dollar amounts received; and
- Providing for freedom of choice for patients to choose their pharmacy

As you may know, the Trump administration proposed a rule through Health and Human

Services (HHS), that would have eliminated the safe harbor that protects PBM rebates from the federal anti-kickback statute. This awesome proposal would have effectively eliminated the PBM rebate system.

Regrettably, the new administration withdrew this essential patient protection. States can play a central role to ensure that patients are still protected from abusive PBM practices.

We ask that you help ensure that our patients and your constituents have affordable access to the medications which they so desperately need, by supporting MO HB 834 and its companion bill SB 403.

Sincerely,

The Alliance for Transparent and Affordable Prescriptions (ATAP) Member Organization

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ATAP continues to support efforts to force the PBM industry to disclose rebate data and encourage transparency and reporting requirements for all entities involved in the prescription drug supply chain – PBMs, insurers, and manufacturers.

To schedule an interview with Dr. Levin or another ATAP spokesperson, please contact Dan Rene of kglobal at 202-329-8357.

Please visit <http://www.atapadvocates.com>

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