AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

February 6, 2024

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to oppose the Protecting Health Care for All Patients Act (H.R. 485). This bill will prevent Medicare, Medicaid, and the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program from employing effectiveness data in price negotiations for prescription drugs and other medical treatments.

The Congressional Budget Office found that blocking the use of treatment effectiveness data will run up hundreds of millions of dollars in costs for federal programs. To fill these budget deficits, H.R. 485 will slash funding from the Prevention and Public Health Fund established by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to provide working families with affordable access to prevention services. In one stroke, this legislation manages to threaten our nation's fiscal and public health.

With spiraling health care costs consuming ever larger shares of household and government budgets, it is important that measures of health care value are used to help determine how taxpayer dollars will be spent on prescription drugs and health care services. Resources should not be wasted on low-value treatments, and profit incentives should reward innovations based on improved clinical benefits for patients.

AFL-CIO strongly believes safeguards should be in place to ensure effectiveness measures are not employed in a way that discriminates against people with disabilities. However, instead of building on sensible safeguards that were put in place by the ACA and the Inflation Reduction Act, this legislation sweeps broadly to ban all "similar measures."

It is important that government programs are able to employ the tools necessary to secure reasonable prices for prescription drugs and other treatments. Millions of working families struggle to afford needed medical care, and we must be assertive in reducing excessive prices.

We urge you to vote against H.R. 485 and look forward to working with you to address appropriate safeguards for the use of value measures.

Sincerely,

William Samuel
Director, Government Affairs