



May 29, 2026

The Honorable John Thune  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

We write on behalf of a coalition of patient advocacy organizations, clinician groups, and health care stakeholders committed to protecting access to care for Medicare beneficiaries. We urge you to oppose the CMS Guarding U.S. Medicare Against Rising Drug Costs (GUARD) Model and defend Medicare's six protected classes policy.

Congress established the six protected classes to ensure that seniors and people with disabilities can access the full range of medications for serious conditions, including cancer, HIV, neurological disorders like epilepsy and Parkinson's, mental illness, and organ transplant rejection. The treatment for these conditions are often not interchangeable. Patients may spend years working with their clinicians to find the right medication regimen. Once stabilized, uninterrupted access is essential.

The GUARD Model threatens that stability.

CMS's own analysis estimates that the model would increase beneficiary cost sharing by \$3.6 billion. Rebates would not reduce costs at the pharmacy counter. Many Medicare beneficiaries live on fixed incomes. Higher out-of-pocket costs will force difficult choices and may lead some patients to delay or forgo treatment.

Further, weakening protections in the six protected classes risks disruptions in care. When



patients lose access to the medications that work for them, health outcomes worsen. Hospitalizations and emergency visits rise. These downstream costs to Medicare can exceed any projected drug savings.

Additionally, the model relies on international pricing comparisons that reflect fundamentally different health systems. Some of these systems use value measures, including QALY-based approaches, that Congress has explicitly rejected in federal programs. Medicare policy should reflect U.S. law and protect older adults and people with disabilities from discriminatory frameworks.

Finally, policy instability in these therapeutic areas threatens continued medical innovation. Patients who rely on protected class drugs depend on sustained research and development to improve and extend their lives.

We support efforts to improve affordability in Medicare Part D. However, reforms must strengthen access, not weaken it. The six protected classes policy has longstanding bipartisan support and remains a critical safeguard for vulnerable patients.

We respectfully ask you to defend this policy and urge CMS to withdraw the GUARD Model. We welcome the opportunity to work with you on practical, patient-centered solutions that lower costs while preserving access to clinically appropriate care.

Sincerely,

The Partnership for Part D Access  
ADAP Advocacy Association  
Aging and HIV Institute  
AiArthritis  
Alliance for Aging Research  
Alliance for Patient Access  
ALS Association  
American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists  
American Brain Coalition



American Cancer Society  
American Epilepsy Society  
American Kidney Fund  
American Parkinson Disease Association  
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)  
Applied Pharmacy Solutions  
ASCP - Age Friendly Pharmacists and Pharmacies  
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network  
Blood Cancer United  
CACNA1A Foundation  
California Access Coalition  
California Behavioral Health Association  
Cancer Support Community  
CancerCare  
Caregiver Action Network  
Chronic Care Policy Alliance  
Chronic Disease Coalition  
Coalition to Cure CHD2  
Community Liver Alliance  
CURE Epilepsy  
CureGRIN Foundation  
Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute  
Danny Did Foundation  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Dravet Syndrome Foundation  
Dup15q Alliance  
Epilepsy Alliance America  
Epilepsy Foundation Alabama  
Epilepsy Foundation Alaska  
Epilepsy Foundation Arizona  
Epilepsy Foundation Arkansas  
Epilepsy Foundation Central & South Texas  
Epilepsy Foundation Florida



Epilepsy Foundation Greater Orange County  
Epilepsy Foundation Indiana  
Epilepsy Foundation Iowa  
Epilepsy Foundation Long Island  
Epilepsy Foundation Los Angeles  
Epilepsy Foundation Louisiana  
Epilepsy Foundation Metro D.C.  
Epilepsy Foundation Mississippi  
Epilepsy Foundation Montana  
Epilepsy Foundation Nebraska  
Epilepsy Foundation Nevada  
Epilepsy Foundation New England  
Epilepsy Foundation New Jersey  
Epilepsy Foundation New Mexico  
Epilepsy Foundation North Carolina  
Epilepsy Foundation North Dakota  
Epilepsy Foundation of America  
Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado & Wyoming  
Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware  
Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Chicago  
Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan  
Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota  
Epilepsy Foundation of Missouri and Kansas  
Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York, Inc.  
Epilepsy Foundation of Northern California  
Epilepsy Foundation of Southeast Tennessee  
Epilepsy Foundation of Wisconsin  
Epilepsy Foundation Ohio  
Epilepsy Foundation Oklahoma  
Epilepsy Foundation Oregon  
Epilepsy Foundation South Carolina  
Epilepsy Foundation South Dakota  
Epilepsy Foundation Utah



Epilepsy Foundation Washington  
Epilepsy Foundation West Virginia  
Generations United  
HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute  
IGA Nephropathy Foundation  
Inseparable  
International Bipolar Foundation  
Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome (LGS) Foundation  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
Lupus Foundation of America  
Mental Health America  
Mental Health America of Ohio  
Mental Health Association in Michigan  
MLD Foundation  
NAMI Oregon  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Consumers League  
National Council for Mental Wellbeing  
National Health Council  
National Kidney Foundation  
National Minority Quality Forum  
NCBA, Inc.  
Neuropathy Action Foundation  
Nevada Chronic Care Collaborative  
Organ Transplant Support, Inc.  
Patients Rising  
Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Foundation  
Pheo Para Alliance  
ReNU2 United  
Rural Minds  
Schizophrenia Policy Action Network  
Susan G. Komen  
The Epilepsy Institute Inc, dba Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York



The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research

The STARR Coalition

Transplant Families

Transplant Journey, Inc.

Transplant Recipients International Organization

Transplant Support Group-Hudson Valley

TSC Alliance

Voices of Alzheimer's

ZERO Prostate Cancer