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May 11, 2009

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Room 615-F
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I am writing to congratulate you on your confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) looks forward to supporting you in your important leadership role in reforming and enhancing the nation's health care system to better serve its citizens.

With our nation facing some of the toughest economic challenges in its history, the need to reassess how we deliver and pay for health care has never been greater. As the spiraling cost of healthcare threatens to overwhelm federal and state budgets, we urgently need a new approach to the delivery of care. We agree with President Obama's comment that healthcare "*is no longer just a moral imperative, it is a fiscal imperative.*"¹

ACCP is a national professional and scientific society representing more than 10,000 clinical pharmacist practitioners, researchers and educators. Our members have been among the profession's leaders for three decades in developing and providing clinical consultation and other patient care services, cutting-edge clinical research, and education programs that improve the quality of medication use in the health care settings in which they practice. Based in Lenexa, Kansas, where we recently purchased a new headquarters building and currently employ more than thirty staff, we are especially pleased to welcome a Kansan to Washington to lead HHS through this critical time.

Clinical pharmacy is a health science discipline in which pharmacists provide patient care that optimizes medication therapy and promotes health, wellness, and disease prevention. The practice of clinical pharmacy embraces the philosophy of pharmaceutical care; it blends a caring orientation with specialized therapeutic knowledge, experience, and judgment for the purpose of ensuring optimal patient outcomes.

¹ President Barack Obama, March 5, 2009. Source:
http://news.bna.com/hcln/HCLNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=11647164&vname=hcpnotallissues&fn=11647164&jd=A0B8B2Q8W4&split=0

Clinical pharmacists care for patients in all health care settings. They possess in-depth knowledge of medications that is integrated with a foundational understanding of the biomedical, pharmaceutical, socio-behavioral, and clinical sciences.

Clinical pharmacists are experts in the therapeutic use of medications. They routinely provide medication therapy evaluations and recommendations to patients and health care professionals. Clinical pharmacists are a primary source of evidence-based clinical information and advice regarding the safe, appropriate, and cost-effective use of medications.

Clinical pharmacists -- as integrated members of the health delivery team -- play a critical role in helping to improve health care outcomes and quality of care while controlling costs. Pharmacist-provided patient care services help prevent medication-related errors and inappropriate medication use.

Each year, the healthcare system incurs an estimated \$177 billion in mostly avoidable healthcare costs to treat adverse events from inappropriate medication use, while between 44,000 and 98,000 Americans die each year as a result of medical errors.²

By supporting clinical pharmacists to assume greater responsibility and accountability for managing medication therapy in direct patient care settings, whether practicing independently or in consultation/collaboration with other health care professionals, we can help reduce the burden of medication misadventures to our health system while improving patients' therapeutic outcomes.

On February 12, 2009, pharmacy's national organizations, including ACCP, released *Pharmacy Principles for Health Care Reform*, which outline three goals related to medication access and use that should be an integral part of any health reform proposal:

- 1) Improve quality and safety of medication use
- 2) Assure patient access to needed medications and pharmacy services
- 3) Promote pharmacy and health information technology (HIT) interoperability

Specifically, ACCP urges you to support additional patient-care services of pharmacists to the Medicare population, which currently has very limited access to this vital care. The majority of Medicare Part D programs provide suboptimal access to pharmacists' services under the medication therapy management (MTM) provision. We hope in your role as HHS Secretary you will support expansion of access to pharmacists' patient care services under Medicare Part B as well as look for ways to enhance the MTM program under Medicare Part D, working with Congress to ensure that patients can access pharmacists' services that achieve optimal medication use outcomes.

² The National Academies Press: To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System (2000) Available from http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=9728&page=1. Accessed January 17, 2007.

Again, ACCP congratulates you on your confirmation as HHS Secretary and looks forward to working with you on healthcare issues affecting Kansas and the nation. As the proposals for healthcare reform begin to take shape, we also urge you to include pharmacists as active participants in developing the framework for our reformed health care system and to incorporate pharmacists' services as an integral part of the solution. Our Washington-based professional staff, whose contact information is found below, stands ready to work with your office at any time to support the Administration's efforts in health care reform.

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Sincerely,



Michael S. Maddux, Pharm.D., FCCP
Executive Director

cc: ACCP Board of Regents