



**Statement of the  
American College of Clinical Pharmacy  
to the  
United States Senate Finance Committee  
Hearing to Consider the Nomination of  
Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.,  
to be  
The Secretary of the U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**

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The American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) offers this statement as the Finance Committee considers the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). We are grateful to the committee and its members for consideration of our views. ACCP has long enjoyed a strong relationship with HHS and its sub-agencies in both Republican and Democratic Administrations, and we look forward to continuing that mutually beneficial relationship as we help advance American's health by providing our expertise to optimize medication therapy.

#### Clinical Pharmacists and Medication Optimization

ACCP represents about 18,000 clinical pharmacists nationwide who work every day with patients, physicians and other health providers to ensure that medications are prescribed, dosed and utilized properly for the best clinical outcomes for patients. The result is "medication optimization" which is most effectively achieved through comprehensive clinical pharmacy services, including comprehensive medication management, by qualified clinical pharmacists as part of collaborative healthcare teams.

Most clinical pharmacists work in formal collaboration with physicians and other providers as members of the patient care team. Patients and physicians alike have benefited from this formal delegation of authority, which increases the quality and effectiveness of care, while improving physician workload and enhancing patient access to high quality care. Clinical pharmacists engage meaningfully with patients and their caregivers to achieve patient-centered therapeutic goals and utilize scientific and real-world evidence to make informed clinical decisions.

#### Prescription Drug Therapy is Vital, But Inappropriate Use Leads to Higher Spending

The value of prescription medication as a vital therapeutic option for patients is well-established. It is estimated that 70% of doctor visits result in the prescribing of a medication<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, too often those medications may not be fully "optimized" for a patient's specific health circumstances. As a result, over half a trillion dollars a year -- \$528 billion -- is consumed due to non-optimized medication use<sup>2</sup> -- the equivalent to 16 percent of total health care spending. This huge amount of waste must be addressed if the country is to establish a viable path for our country's healthcare future.

Given the central role that medications play in the treatment of chronic conditions, combined with the continuing complexity and cost of medications, it is tragic that the nation's health care system consistently fails to deliver the full promise that medications can offer. In our view, that is why it is well past time to recognize and advance the medication expertise of clinical pharmacists.

#### Modernizing Medicare to Cover Comprehensive Clinical Pharmacy Services

To help address the massive and costly "medication misuse" problem, ACCP has proposed coverage for comprehensive clinical pharmacy services in Medicare, including comprehensive medication management. These are direct patient care services, provided by clinical pharmacists working as formal members of the patient's health care team. It has been shown through

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<sup>1</sup> [PharmaTimes: 70% of US doctor visits produce a prescription: govt study.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Annals of Pharmacotherapy: Cost of Prescription Drug-Related Morbidity and Mortality.](#)

empirical, peer-reviewed studies and everyday practice to significantly improve clinical outcomes and enhance the safety of patients' medication use<sup>3</sup>.

We deeply appreciate the positive conversations we have had to date with this committee, officials at HHS and others about comprehensive clinical pharmacy services, and we look forward to continuing to explore the options that are available to policymakers interested in the efficiencies, cost savings and improved outcomes that these services can yield. Toward this end, we welcome the opportunity to provide additional information about the success of comprehensive clinical pharmacy services to this committee and others.

Despite the acceptance and coverage of comprehensive clinical pharmacy services in top-tier integrated healthcare systems like the Mayo Clinic, Kaiser and the U.S. Veterans health program, Medicare does not offer coverage for this care. Adding coverage for these services will help address the staggering human and financial cost of medication misuse in this country. In our view, this needs to be a top priority for the new Congress and the new Administration.

#### Proud Members of the Pharmacy Profession

Finally, in addition to offering our medication expertise on healthcare teams, we are proud to be part of a profession that has provided millions of vaccinations to the American public to help prevent a variety of maladies. From seasonal influenza to pneumococcal pneumonia to COVID-19, pharmacists across the country and in every healthcare setting have assisted the public in receiving safe and effective immunizations for years. During the height of the COVID pandemic, it is estimated that over two thirds of COVID vaccines were administered by pharmacists. As such, pharmacists – including ACCP members – have proven yet again, that they are a vital part of the American healthcare delivery system.

#### Conclusion

We appreciate the committee's attention to our views. Clinical pharmacists play a vital role in our Nation's healthcare system, but unfortunately, the country's biggest healthcare program – Medicare – does not currently recognize the value of their services. Coverage of comprehensive clinical pharmacy services will be one vitally important way to ensure that our Nation's healthcare system is fully modernized, efficacious and cost effective for the future.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact:

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<sup>3</sup> [GTMRx: The Outcomes of Implementing and Integrating Comprehensive Medication Management in Team-Based Care: A Review of the Evidence on Quality, Access and Costs.](#)