



November 19, 2021

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Medicare Part B Premium Increase

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

On behalf of the 2.3 million members of AMAC – Association of Mature American Citizens, I write to offer our great disappointment in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' recent announcement to increase both the Medicare Part B premium and deductible for 2022.

You mention in the November 12 press release announcing these increases that “most people with Medicare will see a 5.9 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in their 2022 Social Security benefits.” You also mention that this COLA increase “will more than cover the increase in the Medicare Part B monthly premium.”

As an organization with more than 2.3 million members throughout the country, many of whom are both Social Security and Medicare beneficiaries, we respectfully disagree. Any advantage the increase in the COLA would provide Social Security beneficiaries next year has already been negatively impacted by the broad-based inflation¹ our economy is currently experiencing.

As many of our members live on fixed incomes, we are particularly concerned with the significant increases in the prices of energy and food which customarily hit senior citizens' budgets the hardest. After accounting for these inflationary increases, it appears there will be very little, if anything, left for retirees to balance the increase in their Medicare Part B premium, even if it is “just” nearly \$260 a year.

You cite the rising cost of drugs as a tangible threat to the sustainability of the Medicare program. It does not make sense to raise the Medicare Part B premium and deductible, which covers physician services, to compensate for increased drug prices. Instead, we urge you to examine the business practices of pharmacy benefit managers (PBM) as means to substantively lower drug costs. Experts say these drug supply chain intermediaries drive up the cost of medicine and threaten the viability of independently owned pharmacies².

¹ [Inflation: Biden White House Mishandling Crisis | National Review](#)

² [PBMs driving up drug and insurance prices, critics say \(ctmirror.org\)](#)

Also, a forum was recently held on Capitol Hill by the House Committee on Oversight and Reform regarding the role PBMs play in drug pricing. AMAC strongly advises that more scrutiny be done by Congress and your agency to study how the consolidation of PBMs could no longer benefit patients, including Medicare beneficiaries.³

We believe evaluating PBM business practices represents a reasonable strategy for lowering drug costs that could yield significant savings for both the Medicare program and the beneficiaries it serves. Please do not burden America's seniors with increased premiums, particularly during the inflationary times in which we find ourselves, when there are worthwhile solutions to address drug costs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Carlston". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

President, AMAC Action

³ [Comer Announces Forum on the Role of Pharmacy Benefit Managers in Drug Pricing - United States House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform](#)