The Honorable Seileen Mullen  
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs  
Defense Health Agency  
7700 Arlington Boulevard  
Suite 5101  
Falls Church, VA 22042-5101

September 29, 2022

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Mullen,

We write to request information regarding the Department of Defense Health Agency’s (DHA) monitoring of TRICARE beneficiaries’ access to retail and community pharmacies.

It has been brought to our attention that Express Scripts has reduced reimbursements for prescriptions dispensed at in-network retail pharmacies for 2023. These reductions may leave many retail pharmacies unable to participate in the TRICARE Pharmacy Program, thus significantly impacting 9.6 million TRICARE beneficiaries’ access to local pharmacies. Most recently, Express Scripts notified pharmacies and beneficiaries that current 2022 pharmacy contracts will expire October 24, 2022, rather than the end of the year. This will only further reduce the pharmacy network for TRICARE patients and their families, and may force beneficiaries to change pharmacies at a time when many receive annual vaccinations.

Pharmacists continue to be one of the most accessible health care providers in the United States. Over 90 percent of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy, and 76.5 percent of pharmacies in rural areas are independent community pharmacies. As you know, in addition to dispensing medications and vaccines, community pharmacies provide services that lead to better health outcomes, lower overall administrative fees, and valuable in-person consultations with a healthcare provider.

To ensure TRICARE beneficiaries maintain access to local pharmacies, we respectfully request answers to the following questions.

1. How is DHA monitoring current and future retail pharmacy participation in the TRICARE Pharmacy program?
2. If future in-network pharmacy participation decreases, what steps will DHA take to ensure adequate access to in-person pharmacy services for TRICARE beneficiaries?
3. Terminating the 2022 pharmacy contracts two months ahead of schedule will likely lead to a disruption of care for TRICARE beneficiaries. What reasons has Express Scripts given DHA for terminating the 2022 contracts early? Please outline what oversight DHA has over Express Scripts, as well as what authority DHA has given Express Scripts to make these contract changes.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Due to the patient access and safety concerns expressed above, we look forward to receiving your response and working with you to
ensure TRICARE beneficiaries continue to receive the utmost care from trusted, local health care professionals.

Sincerely,

Tom Cotton
United States Senator

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

John Thune
United States Senator

John Boozman
United States Senator

Chuck Grassley
United States Senator

Steve Daines
United States Senator

Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator

Jerry Moran
United States Senator

Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator
Mike Rogers  
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress

Jason Smith  
Member of Congress

Tom Cole  
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress

John Rose  
Member of Congress

Diana Harshbarger  
Member of Congress
Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress

Sam Graves  
Member of Congress

Al Lawson  
Member of Congress

Rick W. Allen  
Member of Congress

Bill Posey  
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress

Ralph Norman  
Member of Congress

Steven M. Palazzo  
Member of Congress

Austin Scott  
Member of Congress

Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
Member of Congress
Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress

Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

Ben Cline
Member of Congress

Jerry L. Carl
Member of Congress

Tracey Mann
Member of Congress

Dan Bishop
Member of Congress

French Hill
Member of Congress

Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress

Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress

Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress