



March 4, 2015

Senator Chuck Grassley  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Sherrod Brown  
713 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Grassley and Brown:

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation, thank you for introducing the *Medicare Formulary Improvement Act* (S. 648), which would ensure that anticonvulsants and the other five classes of clinical concern remain protected under Medicare Part D. For Medicare beneficiaries living with chronic conditions, like epilepsy, the six protected classes policy is vital to ensuring that they can reliably and affordably access the lifesaving medications necessary for controlling their condition and maintaining their quality of life.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of more than 2.8 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime. For the majority of people living with epilepsy, anti-epilepsy drugs are the most common and cost effective treatment for controlling or reducing seizures, and they must have meaningful, timely access to physician directed care.

Medications in the six protected drug classes are not interchangeable, and beneficiaries often react quite differently to the available treatments. As a result, managing these serious, chronic, and life-threatening conditions requires meaningful access to the full range of therapies available. When people living with epilepsy are forced to switch medications, or alter their treatment plan, this can lead to breakthrough seizures, associated complications and costs, or even death. Strengthening protections in the Medicare Part D program would help prevent decreased quality of life and health complications for patients, as well as higher costs to the Medicare program and society due to increased hospitalizations and related expensive complications, and lost wages and productivity for beneficiaries, their families, and their communities.

The Epilepsy Foundation supports S. 648 and policy proposals to strengthen the six protected classes policy in Medicare Part D, which is intended to protect the most vulnerable patients by ensuring timely access to lifesaving medications. Please do not hesitate to contact Angela Ostrom, Chief Operating Officer & Vice President Public Policy, at 301-918-3766 or aostrom@efa.org with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip M. Gattone".

Philip M. Gattone, M. Ed.  
President & CEO  
Epilepsy Foundation