NPLB Gets Animated: Roadmap to Patient Affordability and Innovation

Insurance Reform Needed to Cover Prescribed Medicines without High Out-of-Pocket Costs

AUGUST 18, 2021  WASHINGTON, DC -- No Patient Left Behind (NPLB), a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating patients’ out-of-pocket costs and ensuring that drugs go generic without undue delay, today released an animated video explaining how lowering or eliminating out-of-pocket costs is essential to enabling patients access to today’s medicines and innovating tomorrow’s cures.

The short video explains how high out-of-pocket costs stand in the way of patients accessing medicine prescribed by a doctor and authorized by an insurance company. Drug manufacturers often give net discounts to insurance companies averaging roughly 50% off the list price. Unfortunately, even though patients pay monthly insurance premiums, insurers do not regularly pass on those discounts to patients. The video also points out the societal value that occurs when a new drug is invented and when that drug goes off patent to become a copyable generic.

“Ensuring prescription drug affordability and incenting robust pharmaceutical innovation are possible through simple insurance reforms,” said NPLB Executive Director Peter Rubin. “Reforms that help patients and their families – not insurance companies – will improve the health of society and continue to spark biopharma innovation.”

Unaffordable out-of-pocket costs charged by insurance companies can be fatal. A 2021 study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that increasing copays by just $10 causes a significant decrease in patients filling their prescriptions, resulting in a 33% increase in mortality.

“Policymakers can ensure that patients can access drugs prescribed by their doctors and authorized by their insurers through popular bipartisan reforms such as capping Medicare Part D beneficiaries’ monthly out-of-pocket costs,” Rubin concluded.

The video is part of a growing series of policy explainers and presentations developed by NPLB. Explainers on how affordability and innovation, how price controls thwart innovation, and the importance of public and private innovation collaboration can be found on NPLB’s website here.

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