

May 25, 2021

Honorable Senator Joshua Miller  
Chair, Senate Health & Human Services Committee  
Rhode Island State Capitol  
Providence, RI

**RE: Senate Bill 497 – Support**


Dear Chair Joshua Miller,

The Arthritis Foundation asks for your support of Senate Bill 497, relating to prescription drug benefits. The Arthritis Foundation advocates for the disclosure of information that helps consumers make informed healthcare choices and price comparisons. Currently, some pharmacists must sign “gag orders” that prohibit the disclosure of pricing options to patients. These gag orders typically apply to generics and prevent the patient from making the cheaper choice of paying out of pocket rather than paying a higher co-pay. In addition, some practices put in place are so out of hand that there are times that if a patient were to pay the cash price, they would pay less for their medication than if they used their insurance.

Senate Bill 497 seeks to directly address this issue by ensuring that a contract between a pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) or insurer and a pharmacist or pharmacy may not restrict or penalize a pharmacist's or pharmacy's disclosure of cost information to a person purchasing medication. This includes the cost difference between a person's copayment and the price the person could pay without using their insurance.

On behalf of the more than 226,000 adults in Rhode Island living with doctor-diagnosed arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation respectfully ask that you schedule SB 497 for executive action and vote favorably for the legislation.

Sincerely,



Steven Schultz  
Director, State Legislative Affairs  
Arthritis Foundation  
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CC: Members, Senate Health & Human Services Committee