March 21, 2019

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)  Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)
U.S. Senate  U.S. Senate
425 Dirksen Senate Building  135 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510  Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar and Senator Grassley:

The American Academy of Dermatology Association (Academy), which represents more than 13,800 members, is pleased to offer its support for S. 64, the “Preserve Access to Affordable Generics & Biosimilars Act,” which is intended to prevent anti-competitive agreements in which brand drug manufacturers pay generic drug manufacturers not to compete as part of a patent settlement. Dermatologists diagnose and treat more than 3,000 diseases, including skin cancer, psoriasis, immunologic diseases and many genetic disorders. One in four Americans suffers from a skin disease. The Academy appreciates that S. 64 would remove another barrier to the development and entry of generic drugs in the marketplace, which has the potential to increase patients’ access to treatments through increased competition and lower prices for pharmaceuticals.

We appreciate and understand that S. 64 is one step in a comprehensive effort to help make medications more affordable for the average American. Dermatologists are committed to providing the most effective and cost-efficient care and therapies to their patients, including those suffering from chronic, disabling conditions that interfere with activities of daily life, and have a substantial impact on their mental health and personal well-being.

Dermatology drugs have been disproportionately impacted by rising drug prices. A Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology (JAAD) study of 51 generic topical dermatologic medications found that between 2005 and 2016, mean prices increased by 273% while inflation only increased by 23%, with the greatest price change increased by 2529% for nystatin-triamcinolone acetonide cream to treat fungal skin infections.¹ When drugs become cost-prohibitive for patients, they often go without. Access to affordable medication for these conditions is not only medically necessary, it is life-changing, and often life-saving.

The Academy believes that a primary driver of pharmaceutical costs is the reduced level of competition for a variety of drugs and biologics. To that end, the AADA supports legislative efforts such as S. 64 to provide federal agencies with added authority and resources needed to expedite the review process and get additional drugs and biologics to market.

Preserving and improving patients’ access to affordable treatments and transparency in drug pricing is a top priority for the Academy. We appreciate your leadership in championing important patient access issues, and we appreciate your leadership in this effort to address competition in the pharmaceutical marketplace. Please feel free to contact Christine O’Connor, the Academy’s Associate Director, Congressional Policy at coconnor@aad.org or (202) 609-6330 if you have any questions or if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

George J. Hruza, MD MBA FAAD
President, American Academy of Dermatology Association