Sweeping bipartisan package encourages treatment and recovery efforts; company believes more work is needed and recommends next steps

SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)--McKesson Corporation, a leading distributor of life-saving medications and medical surgical supplies, applauded President Trump’s signing of the Substance Use Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act (H.R. 6, [1]).

The sweeping bipartisan legislation, signed into law today, contains measures to prevent and treat opioid use disorder (OUD). The SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act will help in overall efforts to advance treatment and recovery initiatives, improve prevention, protect communities, and bolster efforts to fight deadly illicit synthetic drugs like fentanyl. “With the passage and signature of this bill, Congress and the Administration took important action on addressing the needs of patients and communities hit hard by the nation’s crisis of drug abuse,” said Peter Slone, senior vice-president of Public Affairs, McKesson Corporation. “Expanded access to treatment and recovery services and efforts to limit the over-prescription of opioids are important parts of a long-term solution. While much remains to be done, this legislation represents an important next step in the fight to turn back this public health scourge.”

A year ago, McKesson called on Congress to fast track forward-looking solutions to this public health crisis by making resources available in new ways and with a greater sense of urgency. The company is encouraged by the following provisions of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act:

- **Electronic prescribing of controlled substances**
  Requires that prescriptions for covered Part D drugs under a prescription drug plan for a schedule II, III, IV, or V controlled substance be transmitted by a health care practitioner electronically.

- **Standardizing electronic prior authorization**
  Requires Medicare prescription drug plans to establish drug management programs for at-risk beneficiaries. It also requires electronic prior authorization for covered Part D drugs.

- **Using data to prevent opioid diversion**
  Requires the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to make anonymized information available to registrants with access to ARCOS, including the total number of distributors serving a single pharmacy or practitioner, and the total number of opioid pills distributed to a single pharmacy or practitioner.

- **Opioid quota reform**
  Sets mandatory factors for the DEA to consider when setting annual opioid production quotas, including diversion, abuse, overdose deaths, and public health impacts. It also requires the DEA to elaborate on health benefits in order to approve any increase in the annual opioid quota.

“But, there is still more work to be done,” Slone continued. “The next Congress must consider additional initiatives such as the leveraging of technology and data analytics to better identify at-risk patients earlier. That’s why McKesson has called for establishing a national prescription safety alert system, which would help pharmacists identify and work with at-risk patients.”

McKesson strongly supports H.R. 6688, the Analyzing and Leveraging Existing Rx Transactions (ALERT) Act, recently introduced by Congressman Tom MacArthur (R-NJ) and Congresswoman Ann Kuster (D-NH). The ALERT Act would empower the Food and Drug Administration to establish a prescription safety alert system, which would provide real-time, in-workflow alerts to pharmacists when they encounter a potentially at-risk patient.

McKesson also recommends that Congress leverage the expertise and experience of pharmacists to address substance abuse disorder by enacting policies that make it easier for pharmacists to provide medication-assisted treatment (MAT), the use of medication alongside counseling and behavioral therapies to treat substance use disorders. The expansion of MAT treatment provisions for qualifying physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants is a good start, but pharmacists, who are highly skilled, medically-trained professionals, should also be included.

McKesson is deeply concerned by the impact substance abuse is having on families and communities across the nation and is committed to being part of the solution. The company formed an independent foundation, the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE), dedicated to addressing the crisis, to which McKesson contributed $100 million. The company is also advancing initiatives aimed at preventing substance abuse and has offered additional public policy recommendations.
To learn more about McKesson’s comprehensive efforts to address the opioid epidemic, please visit: [www.McKesson.com/FightingOpioidAbuse](http://www.McKesson.com/FightingOpioidAbuse).

**About McKesson Corporation**

McKesson Corporation, currently ranked 6th on the FORTUNE 500, is a global leader in healthcare supply chain management solutions, retail pharmacy, community oncology and specialty care, and healthcare information technology. McKesson partners with pharmaceutical manufacturers, providers, pharmacies, governments and other organizations in healthcare to help provide the right medicines, medical products and healthcare services to the right patients at the right time, safely and cost-effectively. United by our ICARE shared principles, our employees work every day to innovate and deliver opportunities that make our customers and partners more successful — all for the better health of patients. McKesson has been named the “Most Admired Company” in the healthcare wholesaler category by FORTUNE, a “Best Place to Work” by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, and a top military-friendly company by Military Friendly. For more information, visit [www.mckesson.com](http://www.mckesson.com).

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