



Optimizing Health by Advancing the Quality of Medication Use

February 10, 2022

Congresswoman Cheri Bustos
United States House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Tom Cole
United States House of Representatives
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman G.K. Butterfield
United States House of Representatives
2080 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Markwayne Mullin
United States House of Representatives
2421 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Co-Chairs of the Congressional Social Determinants of Health Caucus:

PQA, the Pharmacy Quality Alliance, is the national quality organization dedicated to improving medication safety, adherence and appropriate use. A measure developer, researcher, educator and convener, PQA's quality initiatives support better medication use and high-quality care.

PQA was established in 2006 as a public-private partnership with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services shortly after the implementation of the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit. A non-profit, non-governmental organization with 250 diverse members across healthcare, PQA was created because prescription drug programs were a major area of health care where there was no organization or national program focused on quality improvement.

PQA is committed to fulfilling our mission of optimizing medication use quality as it relates to social determinants of health (SDOH). Addressing health disparities and ensuring health equity are priorities for PQA because of their impact on medication access, safety and appropriate use. In early 2022, our organization released the first PQA Social Determinants of Health Resource Guide (pqaalliance.org/sdoh-resource-guide), which provides practical, real-world solutions for improving the quality and safety of medication use.

The guide focuses on SDOH screenings, referrals and interventions conducted by or involving pharmacists or pharmacies. Each service profiled addresses at least one of seven SDOH barriers: Cost of Medications; Cultural or Literacy Barriers; Decent, Safe, and Affordable Housing; Food Security; Screening for Unmet Needs; Social Isolation; and Transportation.

This is the first national resource guide that catalogues pharmacist-led and pharmacy-driven SDOH services. It provides health care professionals with ideas and examples of SDOH services they can implement in different settings and adapt to their communities' specific needs.

PQA appreciates the caucus' commitment to exploring opportunities to improve the impact of services delivered to address social determinants with the support of federal funding.

PQA is available to you as a resource for any questions or issues related to SDOH and medication use quality. Our members are among the nation's leaders in addressing SDOH barriers through innovative patient-focused approaches to care.

In addition to the guide, PQA remains focused on strategies to leverage measure stratification to improve outcomes for underserved and vulnerable populations. We also have a number of [research initiatives](#) addressing SDOH, including a [Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute \(PCORI\)-funded project](#) that will convene patient and pharmacy stakeholders in 2022 to develop a patient-centered outcomes research agenda to improve SDOH screenings and interventions in pharmacy settings.

That work builds on the "[Medication Access Framework for Quality Measurement](#)" that PQA released in 2019 to address SDOH that hinder patient medication access and contribute to poor health outcomes.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to improving SDOH. I appreciate the opportunity to share our work on SDOH with you, as you amplify evidence-based approaches to holistic well-being.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Cost'.

Micah Cost, PharmD, MS
Chief Executive Officer
Pharmacy Quality Alliance
mcost@pqaalliance.org