

Chicago Tribune

Prescription drug board flaws

A recent letter from the executive director of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans ([“Prescription drug affordability,”](#) March 16) opines about the importance of medication for Americans. We agree that access to these lifesaving medicines is critically important, but the creation of a government-run health care board is not the answer.

In some states that have implemented a prescription drug affordability board, patients have seen limited access to needed drugs and higher costs — the exact opposite of what this flawed proposal promises. This concept has also failed in some countries, [limiting the availability of drugs](#) for patients who need them most.

Under this concept, government bureaucrats set the value of a drug. If a patient cannot obtain a therapy at the prescription drug affordability board price, or if the pharmacy cannot stock it because of the state-mandated price, then the patient loses access. Such a system ignores the reality of negotiated discounted prices, meaning that they review only the wholesale acquisition cost and not the price patients actually pay. Indeed, pharmaceutical manufacturers spend billions of dollars every year to make sure patients can obtain the medicine they need to live.

In the United Kingdom, where the government controls prices in the marketplace, it can take more than a year from the time a drug is approved to the time it is available to patients. Some countries have a delay of more than three years for a cancer drug to become available.

Pharmaceutical manufacturers are committed to policy solutions that help patients, but we must not sacrifice access to medicine for Illinoisans in the process.

— *Mark Denzler, president and CEO, Illinois Manufacturers’ Association, and John Conrad, president and CEO, Illinois Biotechnology Innovation Organization*