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A Solution to Get 21st Century Treatments to Patients with Chronic Diseases and Disabilities

Rep. Leonard Lance and the National Health Council Join Forces to Encourage Development of New Treatments and Cures

Washington, DC (November 29, 2011) -- Representative Leonard Lance of New Jersey has introduced legislation aimed at "modernizing our nation's drug and diagnostics evaluation and regulatory network" -- the MODDERN Cures Act. The bill was developed in concert with the National Health Council, an organization that provides a united voice for people with chronic diseases and disabilities and their family caregivers.

The MODDERN Cures Act (http://www.puttingpatientsfirst.net/moddern) would create a new category of drugs known as dormant therapies for compounds with insufficient patent protection that offer the promise to treat conditions with unmet medical needs. When creating treatments for patients with degenerative conditions (such as Alzheimer's, ALS, and Parkinson's), autoimmune diseases (such as lupus and Sjögren's Syndrome), and cancer, the patent for the drug compound sometimes expires before or soon after the product is brought to market. Thousands of these potential treatments are just "put on the shelf," and thus, lie dormant. The MODDERN Cures Act would grant a regulatory process to encourage the commercial development of these dormant therapies.

The legislation also would encourage the creation of new diagnostic tests co-developed with new drugs as a way to better identify the most appropriate treatment options for patients. On average, a drug works for only 50 to 75 % of the people who take it, and in 2009 there were only 40 commercially-available diagnostic tests for determining therapies for specific conditions. The bill also ensures speedier access to new diagnostics after approval.

Quote from Representative Lance:

> "In an era of increasingly scarce resources for health research, it is critical to ensure that outdated barriers in the regulatory system are removed and limited dollars are spent most effectively to meet the needs of patients. The status quo is not yielding treatments needed to address the growing epidemic of chronic disease. That is why it is vital that we update the regulatory system by removing the barriers to invention and providing greater predictability in the search for therapies for unmet medical needs."

Quote from National Health Council President Myrl Weinberg:

> "More than 133 million Americans – over 40% of the people in this country – have at least one chronic disease or disability. Despite the roughly $80 billion spent annually on medical research and development, many conditions lack effective treatments. This bill will advance personalized medicine by getting the right medicines to the right people. It will ensure that science, not patent law, drives the development of new therapies."

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