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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Show-Me the Price

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**Congressman Smith Capitol Report
Show-Me the Price
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Information is power. Unfortunately, current rules and regulations are preventing you from having all the information you need when paying for certain prescription drugs. That's right, red tape and insider deals meant to benefit bottom lines are preventing your local pharmacy from being able to tell you if you could pay less for the same prescriptions. That all changed last week when President Trump signed into law a ban of "gag clauses," which had previously benefited health care industry insiders at the expense of Missouri families trying to care for loved ones.

At the start of this Congress, I held half a dozen public roundtables and heard directly from local doctors, patients, pharmacists, small business owners, and families who were all concerned about the rising costs of health care services. Premium prices have increased dramatically since Obamacare became law and fewer choices, if any, have been available where the Obamacare markets have failed. At our roundtables many people shared how very few choices they have in the health care market if at all, from their doctor, their premiums, or their prescriptions. Some of the barriers to competition are built in to the health care system— since Obamacare has been law, fewer options are available, especially in rural areas. But some of these barriers are artificial, imposed by companies at the

pharmacy, preventing the pharmacist from telling customers if cheaper prescription options are available.

I believe in free markets, where the consumer knows all of the products available to them and can make an informed decision that's best for the individual. 'Gag clauses' violate this key principle and cause Americans to pay more for the same prescriptions. By President Trump signing the Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act and the Know the Lowest Price Act, we have banned 'gag clauses' in Medicare and the individual market and prevented insurance companies from concealing lower cost alternatives. Now you can know what options are available to you at the pharmacy and make the decision that is right for your wallet and your health.

Otherwise, allowing companies to ban pharmacists from informing customers moves us closer to the 'single-payer' government takeover of the health care system. President Trump and I want Americans to have the freedom of choice – to see the doctor that is right for them, to have the most affordable prescription options available, and the flexibility to choose the health care plan that best fits their needs. I applaud the Trump Administration for putting “everything on the table if it helps deliver a solution,” to lower health costs, as Health and Human Services Secretary Azar said.

President Obama gave the government more control of the health care system, and services declined while costs skyrocketed. President Trump and I believe the power belongs to the people and you should have as many choices as possible in front of you when you are making health care decisions for you and your family. Americans deserve a health care system that places as little as possible between the doctor and the patient – no gag clauses, bureaucracy, or additional red tape. Government control of the health care system is a disease – and the cure is choice, freedom, and transparency.

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