

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACTS:**

Kimberly Alleyne | (202)-628-3030 | [kalleyne@familiesusa.org](mailto:kalleyne@familiesusa.org)

Carolyn Bobb | 202-637-5108 | [cbobb@aficio.org](mailto:cbobb@aficio.org)

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**National Cross-sector Coalition Calls for Federal Solutions  
to Stem Rising Prescription Costs**

Consumer, Labor, and Provider Groups Unite for Families Burdened by Drug-pricing Crisis

*Families USA and AFL-CIO Leaders to Host Media Briefing*

Washington, D.C., March 20, 2019 – Today, [12 organizations](#) representing health care consumers, labor unions and health care providers, formally launched the **Coalition for Fair Drug Prices**. The diversity of groups is historically symbolic, and demonstrates a collective desire to hold policymakers accountable for reining in high and rising prescription drug prices.

As part of its launch, the Coalition is hosting a **media briefing Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Eastern where it will release its Statement of Principles for prescription drug policy**. Families USA executive director, Frederick Isasi, and AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka will speak at the briefing.

Isasi said, “We and our partners are extremely proud to confront the true crux of America’s prescription drug pricing crisis — patent and market exclusivity abuses that allow pharmaceutical companies to set astronomically high prices that our families can’t afford and that often have no relationship to value or health. Congress created the laws that many pharmaceutical companies are abusing, and they must fix this problem. Now.

“Making matters worse, tax payers fund basic research and development but taxpayers often can’t access, or afford the drugs their hard-earned money helped to create.”

According to results from a [February 2019 Kaiser Family Foundation survey](#), nearly 3 in 10 people across the country skip doses or forgo filling prescriptions altogether due to high costs. The prescription drug crisis puts families at risk for poor health outcomes and threatens their financial stability. What’s more, the survey found that across party lines — and by wide margins — Americans support serious action to reduce drug prices, including allowing the government to negotiate prices with drug companies.

While the Coalition for Fair Drug Prices is supportive of initial efforts Congressional committees have taken this year to address exorbitant prescription drug prices, those efforts are not enough. Families and health care consumers across America want and deserve meaningful reforms that target and reduce the underlying prices of drugs so they are not forced to choose between their health and financial security to get the medication they need.

"Unreasonably high drug prices and unjustified price increases do not happen by chance. They are the result of deliberate policy decisions made in Washington," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

"Patients at the pharmacy counter, workers at the bargaining table and their health plans negotiating with drug companies are all forced to pay the price. That's why working people are joining with other health care advocates to change the rules so families can get the life-saving drugs they need at fair prices."

—MORE—

Linda Massey is a retired nurse from Edmonds, Washington, who relies on expensive prescriptions and is concerned about her long-term ability to afford them.

"I have been on the same medication for my rheumatoid arthritis since almost 1998. Since then, the drug has not changed, but the administration of the drug has changed from a syringe to an auto-inject pen, and with that has come a steady increase in the price. Because of patents and pharmaceutical company monopolies, the drug is unlikely to ever be released in a generic, more affordable form. The drug now costs \$1,500 per month, and the only reason I can get it is because I have found a charity program to help me afford it. Relying on a charity program is not a sustainable solution, because if the program is discontinued, I will be on the line for unaffordable drug costs. People like me rely on our medications to stay healthy, mobile, and self-reliant. The unjust practice of driving up costs arbitrarily keeps drugs like mine out of reach for people who need them the most," Massey said.

Massey will share details of her story during the March 21<sup>st</sup> media briefing.

### **Coalition for Fair Drug Prices Members**

AFL-CIO  
Center for American Progress  
Community Catalyst  
Doctors for America  
Families USA  
Medicare Rights Center  
National Partnership for Women and Families  
Public Citizen  
SEIU  
Health Access California  
Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut  
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative

### **MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Media Briefing: Thursday, March 21, 2019, 1:00 p.m. Eastern**  
**Call-in number: (605) 472-5460; Access code: 565091**

[Frederick Isasi, JD, MPH](#), Executive Director, Families USA

[Richard Trumka](#), President, AFL-CIO

Linda Massey, retired nurse who struggles with high prescription drug costs

