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June 17, 1974

Mrs. Mary Lasker  
29 Beekman Place  
New York, New York 10022

Dear Mary:

Re your note of June 12 which enclosed a letter from Lillian M. Stall, there is at present no Medicare coverage of drugs except as provided and administered to a hospital inpatient. There is coverage of drugs under Medicaid in New York and most states, but the provisions vary all over the place and Mrs. Stall's brother appears to be a victim of state differences. Outpatient drugs are available in New York on a more liberal basis than in Florida. However, even in Florida, Medicaid will pay for certain outpatient drugs provided the physician calls and receives prior authorization. It's absurd, isn't it?

There is a Senate amendment to H.R. 3153 which provides for coverage under Medicare for long-term and costly drug therapy on an outpatient basis. The National Council of Senior Citizens is pressing hard for this one, but the outcome remains in doubt.

As you know, the Health Security bill would cover in full all prescribed drugs needed for the care of people with diseases requiring long-term and costly therapy. Other major bills provide for drug coverage on a partial basis after the patient has satisfied a deductible. In the Nixon plan, there is a separate deductible of \$50 on drugs (in addition to the \$150 per person general deductible) plus co-payments. I'm afraid Ms. Stall, living on \$190 a month Social Security, would not be measurably helped by any of the national health insurance plans except Health Security. Nor would her brother.

Sincerely yours,

  
Max W. Fine

MWF/fr