



*Representing the advocacy interests
of hospitals and health systems on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley*

June 7, 2017

TO: Members, Long Island Delegation of the New York State Legislature
Members, Hudson Valley Delegation of the New York State Legislature

FROM: Kevin W. Dahill, President and CEO

RE: A.8046 (Pretlow) – Referred to Health Committee

The Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, representing 51 hospitals and health systems on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley, supports the intent of A.8046, a bill that would promote prescription drug price transparency.

Pharmaceuticals have transformed the health care system, complementing the technological advances in medical and surgical procedures, allowing for self-treatment of conditions that once might have required hospital care, and prolonging lives. However, both consumers and providers are often unprepared for volatile pricing of prescription drugs. Even for patients with insurance, drug costs can be difficult to manage as copayment amounts may change with fluctuating prices during the course of a year. These price fluctuations may not be readily apparent to patients or their prescribing physicians until after a prescription has already been filled.

With improved price transparency, patients would be able to make more informed decisions about their medications. For example, consumers could discuss with their physicians whether an alternate drug or generic equivalent would be appropriate if the prescribed drug is unaffordable.

A.8046 seeks to achieve this by requiring that consumers be notified of the retail price of a prescription at the time a drug is dispensed but before the consumer is charged. We do have reservations about two aspects of the bill: it is unclear how the proposed price transparency processes would accommodate mail-order prescriptions, and it seems redundant to require both written price notification and an electronic transmission of this same information. The latter – requiring notification via email or text message – is problematic for consumers who do not use those modes of communication. We are confident that these concerns could be resolved through the legislative committee process and nevertheless encourage you to give this bill your consideration.