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Barrow Pushes Legislation to Keep Taxpayer Funded Viagra Out of the Hands of Sex Offenders

Bill would close current loophole allowing convicted sex offenders to use Medicaid funds to purchase erectile dysfunction drugs

Washington, DC – In response to recent reports about convicted sex offenders purchasing erectile dysfunction drugs with taxpayer money, 12th District Congressman John Barrow has officially signed on as a cosponsor of new legislation that would put an end to the practice – restricting registered sex offenders from using federal Medicaid dollars to buy drugs like Viagra, Levitra, or Cialis.

“It’s outrageous, but true. Over the past few years, taxpayers have been funding sexual enhancement for a bunch of convicted rapists or child molesters,” Barrow said. “Paying for convicted sex offenders to get their hands on Viagra is much more than a blatant waste of your taxpayer dollars; it’s a public safety concern.”

“We should be looking for ways to keep this kind of medicine out of the hands of convicted sex offenders – NOT spending your taxpayer dollars to subsidize Viagra for them,” Barrow continued. “It’s time to put an end to this practice once and for all and that’s exactly what this legislation will do.”

Currently, federal regulations allow Medicaid recipients to be reimbursed for drugs that treat erectile dysfunction. On Friday, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that the State of Georgia had recently spent \$1,259 in the last 90 days to fill erectile dysfunction prescriptions for three registered sex offenders. This followed a recent audit from the New York State Comptroller showing that nearly 200 convicted sex offenders in that state had been reimbursed for the cost of similar medications between 2000-2005.

H.R. 2648, introduced by Republican Congressman Vito Fossella, would amend title XIX of the Social Security Act by requiring Medicaid drug utilization review programs to deny coverage of erectile dysfunction drugs for individuals registered, or required to be registered, as sex offenders under sections of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. Enforcement would take effect immediately and would require all 50 states to submit a report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services outlining the steps taken to enact the law.

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