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Council applauds introduction of legislation to increase access to chronic disease treatment

WASHINGTON, D.C. — “We applaud Representatives Diane Black (R-TN) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) for introducing the *Access to Better Care Act of 2016*. This legislation will increase flexibility for employers and consumers, and make it easier to manage chronic conditions,” Council President James A. Klein said today. The bill creates a new safe harbor for “medical management of a chronic disease,” giving Health Savings Account (HSA)-eligible high deductible health plans (HDHPs) the option to cover additional drugs and services before enrollees meet their deductibles.

As the Council has noted in its public policy strategic plan, [A 2020 Vision: Flexibility and the Future of Employee Benefits](#), and its follow-up, [Magnifying A 2020 Vision: A Closer Look at Selected Proposals to Strengthen Employer-Sponsored Health Benefits](#), current law too narrowly defines prevention, and what drugs and services may be offered before enrollees meet their deductibles.

Nearly half of all Americans have at least one chronic condition. “Given that 86 cents of every health care dollar is used to treat chronic conditions, it makes sense to remove barriers that make it harder for health plans to cover clinically proven services that help manage chronic conditions and improve quality of life. We need more common sense bills like this one,” Klein said.

“We look forward to working with Congress on legislation like the Access to Better Care Act that builds on the strong employer-sponsored benefit system to improve Americans' health and financial well-being.

For more information on health policy legislation and its effect on employer-sponsored benefits plans, or to arrange an interview with Klein, or Katy Spangler, senior vice president, health policy, please contact Jason Hammersla, senior director of communications, at jhammersla@abcstaff.org or by phone at 202-621-1982 (office) or 202-422-4652 (cell).

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The American Benefits Council is the national trade association for companies concerned about federal legislation and regulations affecting all aspects of the employee benefits system. The Council's members represent the entire spectrum of the private employee benefits community and either sponsor directly or administer retirement and health plans covering more than 100 million Americans.