

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer

The Office of the Senate Majority Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson

The Office of the House Speaker
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitchell McConnell

The Office of the Senate Minority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries

The Office of the House Minority Leader
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Enact Bipartisan Legislation to Ensure Senior Access to Essential Pharmacist Services Now

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

In the diverse communities we represent across the country, Americans rely on pharmacists to access critical care and services to manage their health and wellbeing. For those we serve and others, the pharmacy remains a safe haven to access critical medications, services, and support. Unfortunately, current federal barriers threaten patient access to essential pharmacist services for millions of America's seniors. On behalf of the communities we serve – including Medicare beneficiaries, rural communities, patients living with chronic and complex conditions, caregivers, and others with limited access to health care – **we urge you to call on Congress to support and enact the Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act (H.R. 1770, S. 2477) before the end of the year and in your capacity call on the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to promptly complete a score for the legislation.** This critical, bipartisan legislation will ensure seniors maintain access to essential pharmacist services for some of the most challenging infectious disease threats facing our communities and strengthen our nation's public health response in the process.

Pharmacists are the first and most accessible health care provider for many patient communities. Nine in ten Americans live within five miles of a pharmacy, and patients visit their community pharmacist twice as frequently as they visit primary care physicians. For seniors, pharmacists serve as a trusted source of care and support, often providing the first point of contact for medication-related concerns and preventing or mitigating the impacts of infectious disease. Pharmacists assist with medication adherence, identify barriers that may prevent patients from taking their medications as prescribed, and implement strategies to improve adherence rates. Pharmacists also play a vital role in delivering immunizations, providing flu shots and other vaccinations to seniors to protect them from preventable diseases.

Access to pharmacists is even more crucial for seniors in rural areas. Pharmacists play a crucial role in ensuring access to quality care for seniors in rural America who often have limited care options and require additional support to manage a complex medical condition. In rural areas, Medicare patients have an average of 14 pharmacy visits per year compared to only 5 primary care encounters, proving pharmacists play a vital role to meet seniors where they are no matter the circumstances.

Without immediate Congressional action, seniors will experience difficulty obtaining essential pharmacist services for common infectious diseases that place a disproportionate burden on older Americans. Congress must act urgently to codify the front-line role pharmacists play to deliver essential care and services to America's seniors.

We urge you to support the Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act (H.R. 1770, S. 2477) and to call on CBO to swiftly provide a score on this critical legislation. H.R. 1770/S. 2477 will provide payment for essential pharmacist services under Medicare Part B and ensure pharmacists can continue to protect seniors from the threat of COVID-19, influenza, RSV, strep throat, pneumococcal, and hepatitis B.

Thank you for your urgent work on this national health priority.

Respectfully,

60 Plus Association
Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP)
Advocates for Responsible Care (ARxC)
Aimed Alliance
Alabama Pharmacy Association
Alabama Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Alaska Pharmacy Association
Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance for Aging Research
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP)
American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP)
American Liver Foundation (ALF)
American Pharmacists Association (APhA)
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)
Arizona Pharmacy Association
Arkansas Association of Health-System Pharmacists
Arkansas Pharmacists Association
Arthritis Foundation
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Biomarker Collaborative
California Chronic Care Coalition
California Hepatitis C Task Force
California Pharmacists Association
California Society of Health-System Pharmacists
California Society of Health-System Pharmacists Research and Education Foundation
CancerCare
Cardinal Health
Caregiver Action Network (CAN)
Caring Ambassadors
Chronic Care Policy Alliance (CCPA)
Colegio de Farmacéuticos de Puerto Rico
Colorado Pharmacists Society

Community Liver Alliance (CLA)
Community Oncology Alliance (COA)
Connecticut Pharmacists Association
Delaware Pharmacists Society
Delaware Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Exon 20 Group
Family Heart Foundation
Florida Pharmacy Association
Florida Society of Health-System Pharmacists
FMI – The Food Industry Association
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research (FSR)
Georgia Pharmacy Association
Global Immunization Action Network Team (GIANT)
Hawaii Pharmacists Association
Healthcare Distribution Alliance (HDA)
Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC)
HealthyWomen
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network
Idaho Retail Pharmacy Council
Idaho Retailers Association
Idaho Society of Health-System Pharmacy
Idaho State Pharmacy Association
Illinois Council of Health-System Pharmacists
Illinois Pharmacists Association
Indiana Pharmacy Association
International Association of Hepatitis Task Forces (IAHTF)
International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis (AiArthritis)
Iowa Pharmacy Association
Kansas Council of Health-System Pharmacy
Kansas Pharmacists Association
Kentucky Pharmacists Association
Kentucky Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Looms For Lupus
Louisiana Society of Health-System Pharmacists
LUNgevity Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Maine Pharmacy Association
Maine Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Maryland Pharmacists Association
Massachusetts Pharmacists Association
Mended Hearts, Inc.
MET Crusaders
Michigan Pharmacists Association
Michigan Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Minnesota Pharmacists Association
Minnesota Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Missouri Pharmacy Association

Missouri Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Montana Pharmacy Association
National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC)
National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations (NASPA)
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)
National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP)
National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS)
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Inc. (NCBA)
National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA)
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Consumers League (NCL)
National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention
National Grange
National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR)
Nebraska Pharmacists Association
Neuropathy Action Foundation (NAF)
Nevada Chronic Care Collaborative
Nevada Pharmacy Alliance
Nevada Society of Health-System Pharmacists
New Hampshire Pharmacists Association
New Hampshire Society of Health-System Pharmacists
New Jersey Pharmacists Association
New Jersey Society of Health-System Pharmacists
New Mexico Pharmacists Association
New York State Council of Health-System Pharmacists
North Carolina Association of Pharmacists
North Dakota Pharmacists Association
North Dakota Pharmacy Service Corporation
Ohio Pharmacists Association
Ohio Society of Health-System Pharmacy
Oklahoma Pharmacists Association
Oklahoma Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Oregon Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Oregon State Pharmacy Association
Patients Rising
PDL1 Amplifieds
Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association
Pennsylvania Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA)
RetireSafe
Rhode Island Pharmacists Association
Rhode Island Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Rx in Reach GA Coalition
Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists (SIDP)
South Carolina Pharmacy Association
South Carolina Society of Health-System Pharmacists

South Dakota Pharmacists Association
South Dakota Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Spondylitis Association of America (SAA)
Susan G. Komen
Tennessee Pharmacists Association
Texas Pharmacy Association
Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Utah Pharmacy Association
Utah Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Vermont Pharmacists Association
Vermont Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Virginia Pharmacy Association
Virginia Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Washington State Pharmacy Association
West Health Institute
West Virginia Pharmacists Association
WomenHeart
Wyoming Society of Health-System Pharmacy