



March 6, 2025

[submitted electronically via: [HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov)]

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan  
Chair, Rhode Island House Health and Human Services Committee  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: H5254 (Kislak), H5429 (Lombardi), and H5498 (Stewart) – SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Donovan, First Vice Chair Giraldo, Second Vice Chair Potter, and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

The Rhode Island Pharmacists Association (RIPA) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) appreciate the opportunity to support [House Bill \(H\) 5254](#) (Rep. Kislak), [H5429](#) (Rep. Lombardi), and [H5498](#) (Rep. Stewart). Together, these bills take essential steps to enhance fairness, transparency, and oversight in the pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) industry, ultimately protecting Rhode Island patients' access to their medications and strengthening local pharmacies.

As a result of the predatory practices of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), patients' access to medications from their local pharmacist across the country has declined<sup>1</sup>, taxpayer dollars have been funneled into corporate profits<sup>2</sup>, and generationally owned community pharmacies have been driven out of business.<sup>3</sup> A study found that PBM tactics forced one state Medicaid program to overpay \$1.9M on a single drug, where PBMs marked up the drug by 800 percent.<sup>4</sup> Appropriate government oversight is necessary to address the misaligned incentives in the PBM industry which prioritizes profits over patients. By ensuring fair reimbursement to pharmacies, addressing predatory pricing models, and increasing regulatory oversight, these bills work to realign incentives in the system so that patient care remains the priority.

When these bills are enacted, PBMs will no longer be able to engage in unfair pricing schemes that drive up drug costs for patients and insurers while underpaying local pharmacies. Patients will experience greater stability in their access to medications, as pharmacies will be better equipped to stay in business and continue serving their communities. The legislation will also ensure that cost savings intended for patients and payers are not siphoned away by PBMs but instead are used to improve affordability and access to care. Additionally, new oversight mechanisms will increase transparency in PBM practices,

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<sup>1</sup> Rose J, Krishnamoorth R. Why your neighborhood community pharmacy may close. *The Hill*. Available at <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/healthcare/530477-why-your-neighborhood-community-pharmacy-may-close>

<sup>2</sup> 3 Axis Advisors. Analysis of PBM Spread Pricing in New York Medicaid Managed Care. Available at <http://www.ncpa.co/pdf/state-advoc/new-york-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Callahan C. Mom-and-pop pharmacies struggle to hang on. *Times Union*. Available at <https://www.timesunion.com/hudsonvalley/news/article/Mom-and-pop-pharmacies-struggle-to-hang-on-16187714.php>

<sup>4</sup> <https://oregonpharmacy.org/2022/10/27/oregon-report/>

enabling regulators to hold PBMs accountable and prevent abusive practices that compromise patient safety.

These bills will help curb rising prescription drug costs, prevent PBM-imposed barriers to medication access, and safeguard Rhode Island taxpayers from wasteful spending in both commercial insurance and the state Medicaid program. By promoting accountability and transparency, these bills ensure that patients can continue to rely on their trusted pharmacists for accessible, affordable, and high-quality care.

For these reasons, RIPA and APhA support H5254, H5429, and H5498 and respectfully request your “AYE” vote. If you have any questions or require additional information, please don’t hesitate to contact Chris Federico, PharmD, BCACP, Immediate Past-President, RI Pharmacists Association, [info@ripharmacists.org](mailto:info@ripharmacists.org), and E. Michael Murphy, PharmD, MBA, APhA Senior Advisor for State Government Affairs by email at [mmurphy@aphanet.org](mailto:mmurphy@aphanet.org).

Sincerely,

Chris Federico PharmD, BCACP  
Immediate Past-President, 2023-2024  
Rhode Island Pharmacists Association

Michael Baxter  
Vice President, Government Affairs  
American Pharmacists Association

cc: Representative Joshua J. Giraldo, First Vice Chair  
Representative Brandon C. Potter, Second Vice Chair  
Representative Mia A. Ackerman  
Representative David A. Bennett  
Representative Jennifer Boylan  
Representative Megan L. Cotter  
Representative Kathleen A. Fogarty  
Representative Arthur Handy  
Representative Marie A. Hopkins  
Representative Rebecca M. Kislak  
Representative Michelle E. McGaw  
Representative David J. Place  
Representative June Speakman  
Representative Jennifer A. Stewart  
Representative John J. Lombardi

**About RIPA:** Established in 1874, RIPA has a rich history and is one of the oldest state pharmacist associations in the country. RIPA unites all pharmacists of the state for professional development and advancement, elevates practice standards, advocates for pharmacy, disseminates relevant scientific and professional information, and encourages collaboration between all allied health professions toward the improvement of public health.

**About APhA:** APhA is the largest association of pharmacists in the United States, advancing the entire pharmacy profession. APhA represents pharmacists in all practice settings, including community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, specialty pharmacies, community health centers, physician offices, ambulatory clinics, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and government facilities. Our members strive to improve medication use, advance patient care, and enhance public health. **In Rhode Island, with 1,170 licensed pharmacists and 1,590 pharmacy technicians, APhA represents the**

**pharmacists and student pharmacists who practice in numerous settings and provide care to many of your constituents.** As the voice of pharmacy, APhA leads the profession and equips members for their role as the medication expert in team-based, patient-centered care. APhA inspires, innovates, and creates opportunities for members and pharmacists worldwide to optimize medication use and health for all.