

August 13, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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

As the Deans of the nation's 113 colleges and schools of pharmacy, we are writing jointly to ask for your urgent assistance to ensure our nation's seniors continue to receive access to vital pharmacist-provided patient care services by passing the Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act (ECAPS) ([H.R. 1770/ S. 2477](#)) into law.

ECAPS (H.R. 1770/S. 2477) will safeguard seniors' access to lower-cost, safe, and accurate pharmacist-provided patient care services where the local community pharmacy is often the only healthcare provider to keep patients out of expensive emergency rooms, save taxpayer funds, and strengthen our nation's public health response.

Under ECAPS, pharmacists will be able to continue to provide preventive healthcare services to seniors at a lower cost than many other providers reducing unnecessary hospitalizations and state and federal healthcare costs.

ECAPS is also vital to keeping pharmacy doors open. Without the ability to offer vital testing, treatment, and immunization services for common respiratory conditions, community pharmacies in rural and underserved areas will keep closing. This forces seniors to travel and receive higher cost of care or forgo care altogether leading to greater downstream negative impacts for our patients and the healthcare system.

Updated [community pharmacy closure data](#) is available to view in your states and congressional districts.

ECAPS is a reimbursement bill and does not supersede state scope of practice laws.

Pharmacists are well-trained and [highly qualified](#) to provide clinical services with a minimum of 6 years of education focusing on pharmacotherapy, medication and disease

management, clinical decision-making, patient education, and preventive care. All college and school of pharmacy graduates earn a doctor of pharmacy (PharmD) degree signifying the complexity and advanced training needed for patient care and medication use and management. All colleges and schools of pharmacy programs are required, by the [2025 Standards for PharmD Program Accreditation](#) from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), to deliver didactic training that includes evidence-based clinical decision making, as well as therapeutic treatment planning which includes diagnosing and prescribing. All student pharmacists are required to complete no less than 36 weeks (1440 hours) of Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences, this is in addition to the required minimum of 300 hours of patient care experience purposefully integrated into the didactic curriculum which prepares pharmacists for post-graduate training. Many PharmD graduates continue with post-graduate training in one of over [2,300 pharmacy residency programs](#) across the U.S., providing pharmacists with specialized skills in a wide range of areas including ambulatory care, infectious diseases, and psychiatry – all areas where physician shortages make patient access to care challenging. As Doctors of Pharmacy, pharmacists are clinically competent, easily accessible providers available right in the local community.

Some key elements that make pharmacists indispensable to the health care system:

- Pharmacists are the most accessible health care provider. Nine in 10 Americans live within 5 miles of a pharmacy, and patients visit their community pharmacist approximately twice as frequently as they visit primary care physicians. Pharmacy locations offer 95.7% more operating hours than physician practice sites.
- Pharmacists keep senior and rural communities healthy. More than half of pharmacists (55%) work in a community-based settings and 77% of community pharmacies serve population areas of 50,000 or fewer.
- Prompt pharmacist care averted 1 million deaths and hundreds of billions in costs. By conservative [estimates](#), the 350 million clinical interventions to approximately 150 million people that pharmacists provided have saved millions of lives and over \$450 billion in healthcare costs. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) agrees and has scored ECAPS with a range as low as \$2.3 billion over 10 years. This return on investment (ROI) for our states and Medicare seniors is undeniable.

Without action, the population most vulnerable to common respiratory conditions, our nation's seniors, will be left without coverage for services provided by pharmacists on which they have come to rely.

Thank you for your continued support for our nation's pharmacists, student pharmacists, and seniors.

Sincerely,

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