



Please Support HB25-1222

Preserving Health Care Access through Rural Independent Pharmacy

Sponsors: Representatives Ty Winter and Meghan Lukens and Senators Dylan Roberts and Cleave Simpson
Representatives Ryan Armagost, Andrew Boesenecker, Dusty Johnson, Tisha Mauro, Yara Zokaie and **House Co-Sponsors** Bacon, Barron, Bird, Bradley, Brown, Caldwell, Clifford, Duran, Espenosa, Froelich, Garcia Sander, Gonzalez R., Hamrick, Joseph, Keltie, Mabrey, Marshall, Martinez, McCluskie, McCormick, Paschal, Richardson, Rutinel, Soper, Stewart K., Story, Velasco, Weinberg and **Senators** Mark Baisley, Scott Bright, Marc Catlin, Nick Hinrichsen, Cathy Kipp, Chris Kolker, Janice Marchman, Rod Pelton, Janice Rich, and Marc Snyder

Pharmacy Closures – the Statistics are Stark: Across the United States, independent pharmacies are facing a crisis. Thousands of these small businesses, which serve as crucial healthcare access points in our communities, are closing at an alarming rate. The reasons are clear: unfair reimbursement practices and untenable financial pressures from Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) that push them out of business. We must act now to protect Colorado’s independent pharmacies and the essential health care services they provide to our rural communities and most vulnerable populations. We must ensure fair reimbursement for these pharmacies, guarantee the survival of these critical businesses and safeguard access to affordable medications.

Over 2,275 independent pharmacies have closed in recent years, and this trend is accelerating. These closures disproportionately affect rural independent pharmacies that serve our rural communities and vulnerable communities – where the next nearest pharmacy to provide these services could be miles away. HB25-1222 is a critical step toward ensuring rural independent pharmacies remain open and continue to provide not just medications, but valuable healthcare services.

HB25-1222 Preserves Health Care Access:

- Ensures fair reimbursement for rural independent pharmacies
- Allows the delivery of drugs to underserved communities by independent pharmacies
- Ensures fair audit recovery practices so pharmacies don’t close
- Permits remote operations giving pharmacies needed flexibility to serve their communities

HB25-1222 Protects Access for Rural Communities and Vulnerable Populations:

Independent pharmacies are the lifeline to our communities. These pharmacies play an indispensable role in our healthcare system, especially for rural communities and underserved vulnerable populations. Independent Pharmacies are not just places to pick up prescriptions — they are often the only healthcare provider for miles, offering consultations, immunizations, and health screenings.

Over the past decade, many of these pharmacies have been forced to close due to low reimbursement rates from PBMs and insurance companies, leaving entire communities without essential healthcare services. The future survival of independent pharmacies is in jeopardy, and without intervention, our rural communities and vulnerable populations served by independent pharmacies will face even greater barriers to accessing medications and essential care.

HB25-1222 Ensures Fair Reimbursement for Independent Pharmacies - the Key to

Success: Independent pharmacies are struggling because they are often reimbursed below cost for the medications they dispense. This leads to unsustainable business models, forcing many pharmacies to close their doors. In contrast, large chain pharmacies and PBMs benefit from bulk pricing and secret rebates, while small pharmacies are left to absorb the losses. Requiring PBMs to implement reimbursement rates based on cost - NADAC plus a specified (Medicaid) dispensing, will ensure independent pharmacies are paid fairly for the medications they provide and paid for the cost of doing business. This adjustment is not just an equitable solution - it is a lifeline for small businesses, enabling them to stay open and continue serving their communities.

HB25-1222 Promotes Healthy Market Competition: Fair reimbursement levels will also ensure that there is a competitive market for pharmacy services. Independent pharmacies often provide more personalized care and lower prices than their larger counterparts. Ensuring these pharmacies can survive will ultimately benefit consumers, leading to better choices, lower costs, and a more dynamic healthcare marketplace.

HB25-1222 Supports Rural Independent Pharmacies, Reduces Healthcare Costs, and Saves Consumers Money: Independent pharmacies offer more than just prescriptions—they are community health hubs. Many independent pharmacists provide counseling services, chronic disease management, immunizations, and other preventative care measures that prevent costly health complications. When independent pharmacies close, patients are forced to turn to higher-cost healthcare settings, such as emergency rooms or urgent care clinics, to meet their healthcare needs. This increases the overall cost of healthcare for everyone, including taxpayers, and leads to worse health outcomes for patients who can't get the care they need in a timely manner.

Research has shown that investing in local healthcare services, like independent pharmacies, reduces the likelihood of more expensive interventions, such as hospitalizations. Supporting independent pharmacies through fair reimbursement not only protects healthcare access but also reduces the burden on the broader healthcare system, leading to cost savings for both patients and taxpayers.

Conclusion: HB25-1222 is Crucial to Preserving Health Care Access. Independent pharmacies are in crisis, but the solution is clear. By ensuring fair reimbursement, we can:

- Protect access to essential medications and healthcare services, especially in rural and underserved vulnerable communities.
- Preserve the pharmacy marketplace, promoting competition, lower prices, and better care.
- Save long-term healthcare costs by supporting community-based services that prevent more expensive health interventions.

Support HB25-1222 and ensure rural independent pharmacies remain a strong, vital part of our healthcare system, and can continue to serve our communities, lower healthcare costs, and improve patient outcomes. A “yes” vote ensures pharmacies stay open, consumers have access to affordable medications, and the healthcare system becomes more efficient for all.

Together, we can secure a healthier, more affordable future for our communities.

For more information, please contact Fofi Mendez 720-530-6914 or Jim Driscoll 720-626-5674

Sources: [Benjamin Jolley Substack: Pharmacy Closures](#) / [GAO Report on Drug Pricing and PBM Practices](#) / [National Community Pharmacists Association](#)



**Organizations Supporting
HB25-1222
Concerning Preserving Health Care Access through Rural Independent Pharmacy**

Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council

Colorado Community Health Network

Colorado Pharmacist Society

Colorado Psychiatric Society

Colorado Rural Health Center, The State Office of Rural Health

Independent Pharmacy Cooperative

NAMI Colorado

Small Business Majority

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

RxPlus Pharmacies