

February 12, 2025

Senator Margaret Rotundo, Chair
Representative Drew Gattine, Chair
Members of the Appropriations and Financial
Affairs Committee

Senator Henry Ingwersen, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Members of the Health and Human Services
Committee

RE: Testimony IN OPPOSITION - LD 210, Language Part "SS" Establishes a \$0.70 cents per pharmacy prescription assessment on pharmacy providers

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) write in **strong opposition** to LD 210, Part SS, which would establish a \$0.70 per prescription assessment on pharmacy providers. This measure threatens to exacerbate the already dire crisis facing community pharmacies in Maine and across the country due to unsustainable reimbursement rates and financial pressures that have led to widespread pharmacy closures,¹ and threatens to further decrease patient access to many Mainers only source of health care.

As a result of the predatory practices of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), patients' access to medications from their local pharmacist across the country has declined², taxpayer dollars have been funneled into corporate profits³, and generationally owned community pharmacies have been driven out of business.⁴ The addition of a per-prescription tax further compounds financial instability, forcing pharmacies to make difficult decisions, including reducing services or closing their doors. This directly impacts patient access to essential medications, vaccinations, and critical pharmacist-provided health care services.

Key concerns regarding this proposed assessment:

1. **Exacerbating Pharmacy Closures** – Pharmacies in [Maine and nationwide](#) are struggling to stay open under reimbursement models that do not cover the cost of medications. A new tax will only

¹ Xu R, Brown A, Berenbrok LA. U.S. Pharmacy Closures January 2014 to March 2024.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/21620f1e07c14d7f81adc4503faaf51e>. Accessed February 11, 2025.

² 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>

³ 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>

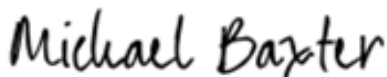
⁴ Callahan C. Mom-and-pop pharmacies struggle to hang on. *Times Union*. Available at <https://www.timesunion.com/hudsonvalley/news/article/Mom-and-pop-pharmacies-struggle-to-hang-on-16187714.php>

accelerate pharmacy closures, particularly in rural and underserved communities, leaving many Mainers without convenient or timely access to care.

2. **Threatening Access to Patient Care** – Pharmacists play a vital role in health care delivery, providing services such as medication counseling, chronic disease management, and immunizations. Increasing financial burdens on pharmacies will only limit Mainers’ access to these essential services, disproportionately affecting rural and other vulnerable populations.
3. **Contradicting Efforts to Improve Healthcare Access** – Federal and state initiatives seek to expand the role of pharmacists, particularly in addressing affordable access to patient care services. Imposing a prescription tax undermines these efforts by destabilizing the very providers essential to these initiatives that are often serving as the only source of health care in many rural and underserved areas of Maine.

APhA urges the Legislature to reject this harmful provision and seek alternative solutions that support pharmacy sustainability rather than destabilize Mainers’ vital access to lifesaving medications and patient care services. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact E. Michael Murphy, PharmD, MBA, APhA Senior Advisor for State Government Affairs, by email at mmurphy@aphanet.org.

Sincerely,



Michael Baxter
Vice President, Government Affairs
American Pharmacists Association

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 Maine, with 1,370 licensed pharmacists and 2,220 pharmacy technicians, APhA represents pharmacists, students, and pharmacy technicians that 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.