

**Testimony of Bedard Pharmacy and Medical Supplies
In Opposition to LD210 SS
Hearing Date: February 12, 2025, at 10:00 AM**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and Representative Gere, as well as members of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Steven Garhartt and I represent Bedard Pharmacy and Medical Supplies, a trusted provider of pharmaceutical and medical supply services in our community for 126 years. We are a long-term care (LTC) pharmacy and a retail pharmacy servicing the Central Maine area. I am here to express our strong opposition to LD210 SS and the proposed Pharmacy Assessment under §2898-B, as we believe it poses significant risks to patient care, pharmacy operations, and the broader healthcare system in our state.

Key Concerns with LD210 SS and the Pharmacy Assessment (§2898-B)

1. Compromised Patient Safety and Access to Medications

- The proposed pharmacy assessment imposes a \$0.70 per prescription fee, which will significantly strain pharmacy finances and limit access to critical medications.
- Maine has already seen a steady decline in pharmacies, a recent pharmacy school closure and a consolidation of medical services restricting patients access to care.
- Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) are continuously reducing reimbursement rates, making it increasingly difficult for pharmacies to sustain operations. This assessment further exacerbates the financial burden.

2. Increased Costs for Patients and Providers

- The assessment will result in additional financial strain on pharmacies, potentially forcing them to pass costs onto patients or cut essential services.
- Smaller, community-based pharmacies like ours operate on tight margins. Increased costs may force us to reconsider the scope of services we can offer, further reducing accessibility for underserved populations.

3. Threat to Pharmacy Viability Leading to Job Loss and Closures

- Given the financial pressures already facing pharmacies, this assessment could result in layoffs or even force long-standing pharmacies like Bedard to close.



- The decline in pharmacy access is particularly concerning for rural and elderly populations who rely on community pharmacies for their medication needs.

4. **Negative Impact on Healthcare Providers and Workforce**

- Pharmacies play a crucial role in the healthcare continuum, working alongside physicians, nurses, and other providers to ensure seamless patient care.
- Increased administrative burdens and financial strain could force independent pharmacies out of business, leading to reduced healthcare access and negatively impacting patient health outcomes.

Conclusion

Bedard Pharmacy and Medical Supplies remains committed to providing high-quality care to our community. However, LD210 SS and the proposed pharmacy assessment threaten our ability to do so by imposing unnecessary financial and operational challenges. We respectfully urge the committee to oppose this legislation and instead work towards balanced policies that protect both patient safety and the viability of healthcare providers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

