

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

My name is Aaron Rusiecki and I am a pharmacy intern and Doctor of Pharmacy student at Husson University. I am a resident of Orono. I am submitting testimony in opposition of LD 210 part SS which establishes a \$0.70 per pharmacy prescription assessment on pharmacy providers. I've worked in local pharmacies and witnessed firsthand how they operate and how this proposed tax would disrupt that balance and threaten their ability to continue to provide services that are needed by their communities.

Local pharmacies are one of the most accessible healthcare providers for many Mainers. These pharmacies are ingrained in the community and the relationships we build with patients are invaluable. We help patients navigate treatment changes, barriers to care, and help them to use their medications safely. People come in that I know by name, and they know me. I've worked in a store where the pharmacist regularly has meaningful conversations with customers, which builds trust. This trust encourages patients to return with questions, share their concerns, and ultimately improves their health outcomes.

My concern with this proposed prescription tax is that it will force pharmacy staff to prioritize making up for lost revenue rather than focusing on patient care, and maybe even force them to cut staff hours or even close. I have seen how pharmacy managers already have to adapt to improve profit margins, often at the expense of time and resources. Pharmacists are pulled away from patient care to train staff on cost-cutting measures, while already being unable to take reasonable breaks to use the bathroom or have a meal during extended shifts. For example, when ordering medications, there are usually multiple manufacturers and bottle sizes to choose from, each with a different price. To help cut costs, pharmacy staff were asked to take extra time to check for better pricing options when ordering. At first, it seemed like a small change, but it quickly added up leaving less time to focus on patient specific needs.

This tax will hurt pharmacies and, more importantly, the Mainers who rely on them for accessible, personalized healthcare. I urge you to consider the real impact it will have on patient care and the health of our communities.

Thank you,

Aaron Rusiecki

Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate

Husson University / University of New England Class of 2027