

May 16, 2019

The Honorable J. Kevin Stitt
Governor, State of Oklahoma
Oklahoma State Capitol
2300 N Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

**RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION SUPPORT OF HB 2632, THE
"PATIENT'S RIGHT TO PHARMACY CHOICE ACT"**

Dear Governor Stitt,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the National Community Pharmacists Association in support of the "Patient's Right to Pharmacy Choice Act" (HB 2632) and respectfully request your approval of the bill, which would increase patient choice of pharmacy providers. HB 2632 was unanimously passed by the Oklahoma State Legislature.

NCPA represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 22,000 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 419 independent community pharmacies in Oklahoma. These Oklahoma pharmacies employ over 3,890 full-time employees and filled almost 25 million prescriptions last year, impacting the lives of thousands of patients in your state.

Community pharmacists have long been concerned with pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) operating as largely unregulated middlemen in the drug supply chain. While PBMs claim to keep drug costs low, we believe PBM practices are often anti-competitive and ultimately drive up healthcare costs for consumers and plan sponsors while reducing payments to pharmacies. PBMs determine which pharmacies patients may choose by creating provider networks, determine which drugs patients can be prescribed by creating drug formularies, and determine how much patients pay at the pharmacy counter for their medications. Despite their authority over patients' health care options, PBMs enjoy little regulatory oversight by the state.

HB 2632 would give some of that authority back to patients by ensuring a patient's ability to make his or her own healthcare decisions is not superseded by a PBM's conflict of interest. The bill would prohibit a PBM from requiring a beneficiary to use a pharmacy in which the PBM has an ownership interest. It would also ensure that PBM provider networks provide adequate access to retail pharmacies. This will give patients the opportunity to choose face-to-face interactions with their chosen health care provider, instead of being forced by a PBM to use mail-order pharmacies, which are often owned by the PBM.

HB 2632 would ensure a patient's choice of pharmacy is left to the patient and is informed by what's in the patient's best interest, instead of what's in the PBM's best interest. To protect patient access to vital pharmacy services, we respectfully ask you to sign HB 2632 into law.

If you have any questions about the information contained in this letter or wish to discuss the issue in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me at 703-405-6482. On a personal note, I am a native Oklahoman from Bartlesville who graduated from the OU Health Sciences Center and Oklahoma City University. I'm still licensed to practice in Oklahoma and strongly believe in the small business pharmacies that are serving patients in their communities. HB 2632 is good for patients and good for Oklahoma small businesses that are the economic lifeblood of hundreds of communities across the state. Please sign HB 2632 into law.

Sincerely,



B. Douglas Hoey, pharmacist, MBA
CEO, National Community Pharmacists Association