



OREGON STATE PHARMACY ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pharmacy Patient Safety At Risk Across Oregon

Portland, OR – For years OSPA has warned that greed by pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) would cause harm to patient safety. Unfortunately, despite the many regulations Oregon has passed, enforcement of those regulations has been subpar and pharmacy reimbursement from PBMs has continued to decline. The harms we have warned of have now come true.

The Oregon State Pharmacy Association (OSPA) strongly urges:

- 1. Immediate action on PBM reform and enforcement efforts**
- 2. Exempting prescription drugs from the Oregon Corporate Activities Tax (CAT)**
- 3. Immediate workplace staffing improvements in chain pharmacies to protect patients and staff.**

“Many community pharmacies across Oregon are 5 to 14 days behind filling prescriptions because they can’t keep up with the demand. These delays providing prescription medication to patients is unacceptable,” said Brian Mayo, Executive Director at OSPA. “The large chain pharmacies must hire additional staff now to provide proper care to their patients.”

Baker County recently reported they are in the middle of a [pharmacy crisis](#). There will soon be other counties joining the outcry if changes are not made immediately. In other forms of business markets, a store would add staff or additional stores would open. However, with the current pharmacy benefit manager reimbursement structure, the margins are causing store closures instead of new business opportunities. To protect our patients and pharmacy staff, OSPA demands immediate improvements to PBM contracts (including enforcement of PBM regulations) and exemption of prescription drugs from the CAT tax, so all pharmacies can afford to hire additional employees.

Bi-Mart recently announced they will be shutting down their pharmacies. Even with Walgreens taking over a few of them, these closures will leave several rural communities without a local pharmacy along with transferring additional workload to other community pharmacies. Many pharmacies simply cannot afford to remain open due to unfair reimbursement from the PBM’s and being taxed twice due to the Corporate Activities Tax (CAT).

In a recent American Pharmacy Association (APhA) survey on [Pharmacy Workplace and Well-Being](#), one Oregon pharmacist commented, “*Patients are at risk. Staff cannot speak up for fear of retaliation.*”

Pharmacy staff are feeling just as frustrated as their customers about putting customers at risk due to the lack of staffing. Mayo said, “The pharmacists, technicians and interns are working as fast as they can. In many cases, they are being forced to continue working without required breaks and voluntarily working longer

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unrecorded hours so they can provide care to their customers. They want to help the patients. That's why they chose this profession, but it feels like things are getting out of control."

Pharmacists have played a key role in vaccine administration for decades and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the ongoing influenza season and the continued COVID vaccine rollout in pharmacies, they are vital to protecting our families, neighbors, and communities! We must improve working conditions in pharmacies for the sake of patient safety and pharmacy staff member well-being.

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Oregon State Pharmacy Association (OSPA) was founded in 1889 as a professional trade association representing its member community of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmacy students and others who have an interest in advancing the practice of pharmacy through advocacy and education, and thereby improving the health of our fellow Oregonians.

OSPA represents pharmacists statewide before the State Legislature, state agencies, Congress and with other health care stakeholders. OSPA provides a wide range of services to both employee and owner member pharmacists, including excellent continuing education opportunities and advanced practice programs.

A very important aspect of our mission is to provide practicing pharmacists with information on the latest developments and trends that affect the profession, both locally and nationally.

To learn more about our efforts to protect pharmacists and patients, visit www.oregonpharmacy.org.

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