

Pharmacy Groups Urge U.S. Senators to Crack Down on Corporate Middlemen

Oregon pharmacists urge Sens. Wyden and Merkley to stop PBMs from gouging local pharmacies with unfair fees that increase prescription costs

West Linn, OR (Feb. 3, 2022)– The **National Community Pharmacists Association** and the **Oregon State Pharmacy Association (OSPA)** are urging seniors and other pharmacy customers to tell their U.S. senators to stop health insurance plan-owned-pharmacy benefit managers from charging discriminatory and unfair fees that put local pharmacies out of business and limit patient access to prescription medications and the pharmacy of their choice.

“PBMs are gigantic corporate middlemen who never treat or counsel a single patient. Just three of them decide how much will be paid and which prescriptions will be covered for as much as 77 percent of U.S. consumers. They impose enormous fees on pharmacies that have increased by 107,400 percent since 2010, and those fees are driving local pharmacies out of business and causing seniors to pay more for their prescriptions. We’re pleased that CMS is working on a rule that might address the backdoor nature of the fees, but we want to make it clear to the Senate that the middlemen’s fees are unjustifiably high regardless of when in the process they are imposed,” **said NCPA CEO B. Douglas Hoey, pharmacist, MBA.**

Michele Belcher, NCPA president and owner of Grants Pass Pharmacy in Grants Pass, Ore., said local pharmacies can’t keep up with the topsy-turvy growth of pharmacy direct and indirect remuneration fees.

“This is as much a problem for patients as it is pharmacies. The PBMs are putting local health care providers out of business. That means patients lose access to their pharmacies. And in many parts of Oregon, the local pharmacy is the only accessible health care provider,” **Belcher said.**

“Bi-Mart closed their pharmacies which leaves several rural communities without a local pharmacy along with transferring additional workload to other community pharmacies. Many pharmacies cannot afford to remain open due to unfair reimbursement from the PBM’s and being taxed twice due to the Corporate Activities Tax (CAT),” **said OSPA President, Lincoln Alexander, PharmD.**

NCPA this week launched a new TV ad running statewide in Oregon. It’s running in multiple other states and the District of Columbia as well. [View the ad here.](#)

For more information about the National Community Pharmacists Association, please visit www.ncpa.org.

For more information about the Oregon State Pharmacy Association, please visit www.oregonpharmacy.org.

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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.

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*Founded in 1898, the National Community Pharmacists Association is **the voice for the community pharmacist**, representing nearly **19,400 pharmacies** that **employ 215,000 individuals** nationwide. Community pharmacies are **rooted in the communities where they are located** and are among **America's most accessible health care providers**. To learn more, visit www.ncpa.org.*