

We Respectfully Request your Co-Sponsorship of S. 1362 / H.R.2759 “The Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act”

What the Legislation Does

Provider status legislation would allow pharmacists in underserved areas to bill Medicare Part B and be reimbursed for services within Florida pharmacists' current scope of practice. S.1362 / HR2759 will provide an equitable and sustainable pathway for Medicare Part B reimbursement for pharmacist-delivered clinical services, provided to commercial and private pay patients. Medicare Part B does not currently reimburse pharmacists for clinical services provided to Medicare beneficiaries. This bill simply adds pharmacists to the list of health care providers who Medicare, by law, reimburses for patient care services without expanding the pharmacist scope of practice.

Improving Access to Care

Pharmacists are the most accessible health care practitioners in Florida with most Floridians living within 5 miles of a pharmacy. It is estimated that only 41% of Florida's primary care medical needs are met considering the current state of physician shortages. This leaves approximately 258 designated areas of health professional shortage across the state. Florida also ranks 37 out of 50 states for health care outcomes demonstrating opportunities to support services that have direct impacts on many public health priorities. Pharmacists provide collaborative services with physicians to optimize medication management and health outcomes resulting in improved physician practice efficiency and allowing for improved Medicare patient access to comprehensive care teams. In 2020, the Florida Legislature passed several laws allowing pharmacists to work directly with physicians under collaborative practice acts to modify drug therapy and optimize patient outcomes.

Health Care Savings

According to the Kaiser Foundation, Florida spends 28 billion dollars on Medicare annually. It is demonstrated **that for every \$1 spent on pharmacist services, \$10-20 is saved. Pharmacist will bill at rates 15% less than current physician rates thus creating a savings opportunity to health systems, increasing patient safety and outcomes, and reducing health care spending when integrated in the comprehensive care plan to help manage patients with chronic diseases.**

Pharmacists' Value, Education, and Training

Today's pharmacists graduate with a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree, a professional degree that requires a minimum of 6-8 years to complete and includes clinical and direct patient care experience. Pharmacists are an incredible resource to the clinical provider care team with more medication-related education and training than any other health care provider. Pharmacists are easy to reach and ready to help, but without Medicare reimbursement, they cannot sustainably provide their patient care services. Florida has 30,000 pharmacists trained, poised, and ready to support the needs of Medicare beneficiaries, of which Florida has a substantial number. In many cases, pharmacists are already providing services without the support of Medicare reimbursement. This became apparent during the current COVID-19 pandemic where pharmacists are testing and vaccinating patients, as well as partnering with physicians, nurses, and other health professionals on the frontline to keep communities safe.

This bill does not expand pharmacists' scope of practice. Rather, it simply allows pharmacists to be reimbursed for providing Medicare beneficiaries with the same level of care that is received by commercial and private payers.

Thank you in advance for your continued support and commitment to Medicare patients.

For more information including references please contact tamekia@fshp.org