



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** NACDS [Kathleen Bashur](#) (703) 837-4367

WSPA [Jenny Arnold](#) (425) 228-7171

NCPA [Andrea Pivarunas](#) (703) 600-1174

## **In a Major Victory for Patient Access, WSPA, NACDS, NCPA Help Ensure Washington State Makes the Move to Cost-Based Dispensing Fees**

***Settlement reached with the State of Washington brings to an end Washington State's flawed pharmacy reimbursement plan; offers hope for the ability of pharmacies to continue to meet patients' needs in Washington State and across the nation***

**Olympia, WA** - The Washington State Pharmacy Association (WSPA), the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA), and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) are applauding a major victory in Washington State for patient access and for the viability of the pharmacies of all sizes and types on which they rely.

WSPA, NCPA and NACDS today announced that they have negotiated an unprecedented [settlement](#) with the State of Washington in their [joint six-year state lawsuit](#) challenging Washington State's failure to move to cost-based dispensing fees.

**In exchange for the pharmacy groups dismissing their lawsuit, Washington State has agreed to:**

- conduct a cost of dispensing study to move to cost-based dispensing fees, subject to necessary state and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approval;
- provide more than \$60 million in retroactive payments to pharmacies in Washington State's fee-for-service Medicaid program— covering under-paid claims from April 1, 2017-July 1, 2023; and
- use, as an intermediate step, Oregon's cost-based dispensing fees and tiers from July 1, 2023, going forward, until a new cost-based dispensing fee obtains necessary state and CMS approval.

The positive news follows a [critical and final decision](#) by CMS in June 2022 – facilitated by joint WSPA, NCPA and NACDS federal litigation — in which the Agency reversed its approval of

Washington State's unlawful pharmacy reimbursement plan, and determined that the Washington State Plan Amendment, which unfairly reimbursed pharmacies of all sizes well-below cost, was disapproved.

"Pharmacies serve as lifelines for Washington State communities, delivering vital medications, guidance, vaccines, and indispensable services," **said WSPA CEO Jenny Arnold**. "For six years, they have cared for Medicaid patients, hoping their care would be rightly reimbursed. This settlement marks a crucial stride in preserving access to care, keeping pharmacy doors open, and rectifying the long-standing underpayment of essential healthcare."

"This is a massive victory for independent community pharmacists in Washington state and the patients they serve. Pharmacies that are reimbursed below their cost cannot remain in business, and patients lose access to their most trusted healthcare providers," **said NCPA CEO B. Douglas Hoey**. "We are very pleased pharmacists in Washington will finally be reimbursed fairly, and that they will recoup some of the losses imposed on them by the previous system."

"This is a decisive victory for Washington State pharmacies and their patients, and it also demonstrates the importance of fairness for vulnerable Americans across the nation and the pharmacies that serve them," **said NACDS President and CEO Steven C. Anderson**. "The move to cost-based dispensing fees in the states is critical to support the ability of pharmacies to continue to deliver the essential health and wellness services that patients rely on and expect."

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*Founded in 1890, the WSPA is a prominent professional organization proudly serving as the leading advocate for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy students in the state of Washington. We are at the forefront of advancing pharmacy care throughout the state, offering powerful legislative efforts, extensive networking opportunities, and comprehensive educational resources for pharmacy professionals. At the WSPA, our core mission is to be the unwavering voice of the profession committed to ensuring that pharmacy professionals are duly recognized, fully engaged, and valued as indispensable contributors to the healthcare team to increase access to care and provide superior service to patients and communities.*

*Founded in 1898, the National Community Pharmacists Association is the voice for the community pharmacist, representing over 19,400 pharmacies that employ nearly 240,000 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](http://www.ncpa.org).*

*NACDS represents traditional drug stores, supermarkets and mass merchants with pharmacies. Chains operate over 40,000 pharmacies, and NACDS' member companies include regional chains, with a minimum of four stores, and national companies. Chains employ nearly 3 million individuals, including 155,000 pharmacists. They fill over 3 billion prescriptions yearly, and help patients use medicines correctly and safely, while offering innovative services that improve patient health and healthcare affordability. NACDS members also include more than 900 supplier partners and over 70 international members representing 21 countries. Please visit [NACDS.org](http://NACDS.org)*