



Pharmacy the way it should be.

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February 1st, 2023

To our patients, patrons, neighbors, friends, and other community members:

Two United States senators have just reintroduced legislation that proposes several reforms to our broken pharmaceutical industry, focusing on making the conduct of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) more transparent and just. **And NOW is the time to act.**

We stopped taking new patients at St. Paul Corner Drug November 1st, 2022 because we are facing the ever-growing obstacle of *losing* money performing our primary job: dispensing prescription medications to patients (which is, put simply, due to the conduct of PBMs). And so, for us, more patients does not lead to positive growth; rather, it simply adds to our already stretched workload in a way that prevents us from providing the safe, efficient care we're known for, while simultaneously pushing us even further into the red zone. This is an obstacle that, no matter how much reinventing we do or creative we get, will remain insurmountable as long as PBMs are allowed to continue *legally* stealing from patients like you and providers like us. And when providers like us—community-based, independently owned pharmacies—go away in our current environment, it will likely be for good; and, along with it, will be the personalized, hands-on, readily accessible care we provide to American residents.

Every day, people come into our pharmacy and, when they can't transfer their prescriptions to us or can no longer get their medications and vaccines covered at our pharmacy because of their health insurance plan, ask us what they can do to help. **Contacting your representatives in the US Congress immediately, by any means available, is the most powerful thing you can do right now.** For other ideas, please [read our letter](#) we released regarding our decision to stop taking new patients for the foreseeable future.

To find your congresspeople, [click here](#) to visit Common Cause, a nonpartisan organization where you can enter the address where you're registered to vote and discover the names, contact information, and contribution details of your congresspeople.

In Minnesota, we are currently represented in the Senate by:

- **Amy Klobuchar (D)**
 - [Amy's homepage](#)
 - [Email Amy](#) (contact form on website)
 - **Toll-free number:** 1 (888) 224-9043
 - **Legislative address and phone:**
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3244

- **Tina Smith (D)**
 - [Tina's homepage](#)
 - [Email Tina](#) (contact form on website)
 - **Legislative address and phone:**
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-5641

Also, if you're not currently registered to vote, [click here](#) to be taken to TurboVote, where you can register as well as check your current registration, set election-related reminders, vote early, and more. It's not a necessity in order to contact your legislative representatives, but *is* an essential part of making your voice heard in our democracy.

Below, you'll find sample scripts and email/letter templates that you can use when contacting your legislators over the phone, in an email, or via the physical mail. The verbiage for sample emails can be copied and pasted directly into an email or contact form (URLs may or may not transfer over), whereas the last page of this document can be printed and mailed after writing in the recipient's name and your own name and signature.

Some great resources for learning more about this issue include:

- [Fierce Healthcare article about the recent reintroduction of the Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act and Prescription Pricing for the People Act](#)
- [Pharmacists United for Truth and Transparency's \(PUTT's\) Official Comment to the Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) re: Unfair or Deceptive Fees Trade Regulation Rule Commission Matter No. R207011](#)
- [The Commonwealth Fund's webpage on "Pharmacy Benefit Managers and Their Role in Drug Spending"](#)

While we encourage you to educate yourself and proceed independently as best as you can—because time is of the essence, and we don't have a lot extra of it to give—if you have further questions about what to say or who to call, don't hesitate to reach out to us at (651) 698-8859 or pharmacy@stpaulcornerdrug.com.

Thank you sincerely in advance for your support and action—it quite simply means the world to us.

In health,

The Team at SPCD

SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR SAMPLE SCRIPTS & TEMPLATES

SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT

STEPS

1. Introduce yourself, including what community you represent in the legislator's constituency
2. Share your professional expertise to establish credibility (if applicable; this can also just be where you say that you're a patient of the American healthcare system and a concerned citizen!)
3. Briefly describe the issue and the impact (a great place to share your personal story!)
4. Expected action from the representative
5. Thank the representative with a persuasive ending note

SCRIPTS

Areas highlighted in green are great places to share your personal story! For example, if your insurance company ever forced you to transfer to a chain pharmacy or doesn't cover the cost of vaccine administration at an independent pharmacy; if your medications are becoming/have become unaffordable; if the care you've received at an independent pharmacy has positively impacted you (or, alternatively, if the low-quality care you or a loved one has received at a chain pharmacy has negatively impacted your health journey)...

SCRIPT 1

Hello, [representative's name]! I'm a constituent from [your city], Minnesota. I'd like to take a few moments of your time to put forth my concerns regarding Pharmacy Benefit Manager, or PBM, abuse in our nation's pharmaceutical industry, which has allowed these entities to control drug pricing at the expense of patients, providers, and the US government, among other injustices.

I'm currently a patient of a local, independently owned pharmacy where I receive high-quality, personalized, and accessible care. Unfortunately, this pharmacy is at high risk of closing due to the current lack of transparency and accountability in the pharmaceutical industry. My pharmacist and their colleagues are essential to my personal wellness, and I can't imagine if they were no longer there to call or visit in-person when I have questions, concerns, or need a recommendation. I worry that this day will come, and I will be forced to transfer my care to a chain pharmacy, where I know I will receive much lower quality care.

I urge you to support the Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act (S.127) and Prescription Pricing for the People Act (S.113) recently reintroduced by Senators Maria Cantwell and Chuck Grassley. By doing so, you would be helping address the issue of PBM abuse, advocating for better working conditions for independent pharmacy staff, and ensuring that community pharmacy remains accessible for all Americans. Further investigation by the FTC into the conduct of PBMs, including their merging with health insurance companies, is a necessary part of this endeavor.

Please support patients like me by co-sponsoring these two essential pieces of legislation. We believe in you, [representative's name]. I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me.

SCRIPT 2

Hello, [representative's name]! I'm a constituent from [your city], Minnesota. I'm calling to ask that you support the enactment of Senate bills 127 and 113, also known as the Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act and

Prescription Pricing for the People Act, respectively. These bills were recently reintroduced by Senators Maria Cantwell and Chuck Grassley.

Over the course of my spouse's illness, my local pharmacists have been invaluable resources. They have answered our numerous questions with care, delivered emergency prescriptions after hours, and altogether made our days brighter in the midst of a very challenging time. Because of the way in which PBMs are allowed to take advantage of our broken pharmaceutical industry and healthcare system, their survival has been and remains at risk. Like any other provider, our pharmacists are an integral part of our healthcare experience, and they deserve to work in an environment that is healthy and where they are compensated fairly for their work.

The actions of PBMs have created an industry where this is not so through oppressive and unjust practices such as collecting clawbacks, spread pricing, gag clauses, and patient steering.

Please support these two bills that will address the issue of PBM abuse. By doing so, you would be an integral part of ensuring that community pharmacy in our nation lives on, as well as the improvement of our healthcare system at-large. Thank you for your time and hard work.

SAMPLE EMAIL TEMPLATE (CURRENT SPCD PATIENTS)

Dear [insert legislator's title and name],

My name is [insert your name], and I'm a constituent from [insert your city], Minnesota and a patient at St. Paul Corner Drug, an independent pharmacy in Saint Paul, MN. I am reaching out to urge you to support the enactment of the Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act (S.127) and Prescription Pricing for the People Act (S.113).

There are numerous harmful ways in which Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) take advantage of our nation's healthcare system and the patients like me that are cared for within it. This includes but is not limited to: financial clawbacks, spread pricing, gag clauses, exclusionary formularies, the utilization of drug manufacturer rebates as revenue, and steering patients toward PBM-owned or affiliated corporate chain pharmacies.

Over the past several years, and especially throughout the COVID pandemic, I've witnessed my local pharmacy providers working harder and harder to make ends meet as they are reimbursed less and less for the valuable work that they do for our community. At this point, they are, understandably, at high risk of going out of business, as so many independent pharmacies across our country have in recent decades. The magnitude of this problem is even more dire in light of the [recent announcement by Walmart and CVS pharmacies that they are reducing their service hours from 9pm to 7pm at a majority of their stores due to staffing shortages](#). (Walgreens has already been doing this spontaneously for months). The conditions pharmacists and technicians are working in, both in independent and chain pharmacies, is [unsustainable and unconscionable](#). The current pharmacy I go to is 101 years old and at risk of going away because PBMs are raking in all of the profits while having none of their skin in the game. Lina Khan and the FTC have begun the work of evaluating the breadth of PBM abuse in the industry, but there is much more to be done, and these bills will serve to support that meaningful—and necessary—endeavor.

Now more than ever, patients need access to high-quality, community-based pharmacy care. Furthermore, this care needs to be provided by pharmacists, technicians, and other pharmacy staff in a healthy working environment

where they can spend their time caring for patients instead of fighting to stay alive. While wait times for appointments with physicians and other care providers get longer, community pharmacists remain an essential resource for patients who have immediate questions or concerns.

Nearly everything that doesn't work within our healthcare system—from the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs in America to our nation's poor health outcomes—can at least in part be explained by our broken pharmaceutical industry. This issue is urgent and at a critical crossroads, and we need Congress to act immediately.

I implore you to consider supporting these bills, if not co-sponsoring them, so that they may serve as a meaningful starting point toward a more just, transparent pharmaceutical industry and, ultimately, more accessible care and better health outcomes for American patients like you and me.

Sincerely,

[Insert your name]

SAMPLE EMAIL TEMPLATE (NON-SPCD PATIENTS)

Dear [insert legislator's title and name],

My name is [insert your name], and I'm a constituent from [insert your city], Minnesota. I am reaching out to urge you to support the enactment of the Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act (S.127) and Prescription Pricing for the People Act (S.113).

There are numerous harmful ways in which Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) take advantage of our nation's healthcare system and the patients like me that are cared for within it. This includes but is not limited to: financial clawbacks, spread pricing, gag clauses, exclusionary formularies, the utilization of drug manufacturer rebates as revenue, and steering patients toward PBM-owned or affiliated corporate chain pharmacies.

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Sincerely,

[Insert your name]

SAMPLE LETTER BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE

To utilize this template, print out the following page of this document and fill in the spaces left for the date (top), recipient's name and title, your name, the Minnesota city you live in, and your signature. Then, mail to the address of your intended recipient (e.g., Senator Amy Klobuchar).

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