



June 11, 2021

[Submitted electronically to: Elisabeth.Arenales@state.co.us]

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor
State Capitol Bldg
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 136
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

I am writing on behalf of the 8,411+ licensed pharmacists in Colorado to request you sign the recently passed [HB 21-1275](#) to recognize Colorado's pharmacists as health care providers.

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) is the largest association of pharmacists in the United States advancing the entire pharmacy profession—including 240 pharmacists in Colorado. APhA represents pharmacists in all practice settings, including community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, specialty pharmacies, community health centers, physician offices, ambulatory clinics, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and government facilities. Our members strive to improve medication use, advance patient care and enhance public health.

HB 21-1275 modifies the state's Medicaid program to include payment to pharmacists working in a collaborative practice agreement for services within their scope of practice and are not duplicative of existing services covered by Medicaid. Pharmacists are already providing these patient care services in many underserved and rural areas of the state to provide equitable access to care. In addition, the bill authorizes Medicaid payments to authorized pharmacists to administer or dispense extended-release injectable medications for treatment of mental health or substance use disorders, which can be paid either as a pharmacy or medical benefit. Lastly, the bill requires that clinical pharmacy services be considered allowable costs in a federally qualified health center (FQHC) setting.

The bill acknowledges that pharmacists are already currently saving money for Colorado's health care system by providing necessary medical services due to the lack of available providers. Savings which will only increase with the passage of HB 21-1275 to alleviate the mental health crisis in Colorado and improve patients' medication adherence and outcomes.



The Colorado Legislature’s nonpartisan Legislative Council Staff’s Revised [Fiscal Note](#) states “[b]y receiving improved chronic disease control or disease prevention services, Medicaid clients may see a reduction in emergency department visits or other costly medical interventions that would otherwise be incurred.”

You have stated that “it’s time for states to take the lead on saving people money on health care.” We agree and HB 21-1275 is a major step toward achieving your goal to rewarding preventive care and “Saving Coloradans Money on Health Care.” On behalf of Colorado’s pharmacists and their patients, I urge you to sign HB 21-1275 into law to leverage pharmacists’ expertise to reduce health care costs and better meet the needs of patients in Colorado.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Scott Knoer', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Scott Knoer, M.S., Pharm.D., FASHP
Executive Vice President and CEO
APhA