



March 29, 2023

Senator Deb Patterson
Chair
Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Senator Cedric Hayden
Vice Chair
Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for SB 1085; Enhancing Public Access to Pharmacist Testing and Treatment Services for Certain Health Conditions

Dear Senator Patterson and Senator Hayden,

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores is writing in support of SB 1085, important legislation supporting patient access to essential healthcare services at neighborhood pharmacies. This bill will expand access to care and help to improve health outcomes, access, and equity for people across the state by allowing pharmacists to offer “test to treat” services for short term health conditions such as flu, strep, and COVID. The bill will also allow pharmacists to use the expertise of the full pharmacy team – including pharmacy technicians – to help deliver these services and will require equitable coverage and reimbursement to pharmacy providers to help sustain these services for the public.

Notably, pharmacy personnel are currently allowed to provide “test to treat” services for COVID under temporary authorities granted to them by the federal government during the COVID pandemic. The federal allowances for pharmacists, pharmacy interns and pharmacy technicians to deliver COVID testing services have bolstered pharmacies’ capacity to deliver critical, quality pharmacy testing services to communities throughout Oregon.

The availability of these services at local pharmacies has served to quickly and safely connect the public – including medically underserved, rural, and urban communities – with needed testing and initiation of treatment services. Authorizing pharmacists to provide testing access and initiate needed treatment based on those test results makes it easier for people to efficiently and conveniently access lifesaving therapy and prevent unneeded hospitalizations. Pharmacy-based testing and treatment services streamline the process for people to receive testing and treatment in one place, instead of going to one healthcare location for the test and then to the pharmacy to pick up their treatment.

Importantly –

- 90% of all Americans live within 5 miles of pharmacy.
- Pharmacies support the 20,000 COVID-19 testing sites nationwide.
- Pharmacies have provided more than 45 million COVID-19 tests.
- 70% of pharmacy testing sites are in areas with moderate to severe social vulnerability.

The experience of the COVID pandemic cemented the public’s reliance on community pharmacies for “test to treat” services. In fact, a poll commissioned by NACDS and conducted by Morning Consult December 7-12, 2022, found that 67% of adults in Oregon believe “learning the lessons of the pandemic means keeping in place policies that make it easier for patients to access services from pharmacists and other pharmacy team members.” By permanently authorizing pharmacy personnel to deliver “test to treat” services for COVID and other common conditions, this bill will allow the public to continue to receive the care that they now expect at their local pharmacy.

As neighborhood health care destinations, community pharmacies connect patients to convenient care in one place. Recognizing this, states like Idaho, Alaska and Colorado have already acted to authorize the types of “test to treat” pharmacy services that would be allowed under this bill. **We urge your support in passing SB 1085 so that the people of Oregon would similarly have better healthcare access in their local communities.** If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact NACDS’ Sandra Guckian, Vice President, State Pharmacy and Advocacy, at sguckian@nacds.org or 703-837-4195.

Sincerely,



Steven C. Anderson, FASAE, CAE, IOM
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Association of Chain Drug Stores

Cc: Members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care

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NACDS represents traditional drug stores, supermarkets and mass merchants with pharmacies. Chains operate nearly 40,000 pharmacies, and NACDS’ chain 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.