



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHAIN DRUG STORES

Testimony

Colorado House Health & Human Services Committee

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

Support HB 26-1336 – Measures to Increase Access to Pharmacy Services

On behalf of our members operating over 600 chain pharmacies across Colorado, the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) writes to express strong support for HB 26-1336. Importantly, this legislation will strengthen access to timely, high-quality healthcare services by supporting Medicaid and commercial health plan coverage of pharmacist-provided care within their scope of practice, extending allowances for families with younger children to access pharmacy-based testing and treatment for routine illnesses, and empowering the pharmacy technician workforce to better serve patients. We appreciate the Committee's consideration and respectfully urge its passage.

Colorado continues to face significant healthcare access challenges, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Notably, 54 of Colorado's 64 counties are designated health professional shortage areas, underscoring the urgent need to expand access points for care. In this context, pharmacies are uniquely positioned to help address gaps. Nearly 90 percent of Americans live within five miles of a pharmacy, and patients routinely rely on pharmacies for care during evenings and weekends when other healthcare settings may be unavailable. As demand for healthcare services continues to grow, it is essential to adopt policies that enable pharmacies to meet patients where they are.

Ensuring Coverage of Pharmacist-Provided Healthcare Services: Pharmacist-provided healthcare services can only be scaled and sustained if effective payment policies are in place to compensate pharmacists for the care they deliver. Pharmacists complete doctoral-level education and are equipped to deliver a wide range of clinical services, including testing and treatment for common conditions. However, current reimbursement policies often fail to support the full range of care provided by pharmacists. Encouragingly, the public strongly supports addressing this gap, with more than 73 percent of adults in Colorado supporting adequate reimbursement from private and government insurers for pharmacist-provided services. Strengthening coverage requirements will help remove unnecessary barriers for patients to more readily access care from their local pharmacist.

Expanding Pharmacist Authority to Provide Test-and-Treat Services to Children:

Expanding access also means ensuring that patients, especially families with young children, can receive care in convenient settings. By extending pharmacist-provided test-and-treat services to children ages 12 and under, HB 26-1336 allows parents to quickly

address common, minor conditions without delays or missed work and school. With pharmacies open during evenings and weekends, working families have a practical option when pediatrician offices are closed. This helps avoid unnecessary and costly emergency room visits for non-urgent needs while still receiving timely, appropriate care. It also reduces avoidable healthcare spending, which totals billions of dollars annually. Research consistently shows that pharmacist-led testing and treatment is safe, clinically effective, and cost-efficient, improving patient satisfaction and access to care, particularly in communities with limited access to other healthcare providers.

Authorizing Pharmacy Technicians to Perform Final Product Verification: Meeting growing patient demands also requires making full use of the pharmacy team. HB 26-1336 appropriately authorizes pharmacy technicians to perform final product verification under pharmacist supervision, a technical and nondiscretionary function that can be safely delegated within a structured quality assurance framework. Research funded by NACDS across Iowa, Wisconsin, and Tennessee has demonstrated through evidence-based pilot studies that technicians can safely, consistently, and accurately verify medications prepared by other technicians. These findings build on decades of experience in hospital settings and show that technician product verification can be safely implemented in community pharmacies as well. Allowing technicians to perform this function enables pharmacists to focus more of their time on direct patient care, further expanding the capacity of pharmacies to effectively serve patients.

Taken together, these provisions will improve access to care across Colorado by strengthening insurance coverage for convenient care at pharmacies, expanding routine care options for children and their families, and bolstering the efficiency of the state's pharmacy workforce.

NACDS respectfully urges the Committee to support HB 26-1336 and advance policies that empower pharmacies to meet the needs of Colorado communities as accessible, trusted healthcare destinations across the state.

Respectfully submitted by:

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