



Pharmacy Allies Transforming Healthcare

## **Support for H.R. 3164 – The Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act**

EmpiRx Health, through our pharmacy advocacy platform PATH (Pharmacy Allies Transforming Healthcare), strongly supports H.R. 3164, the *Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act (ECAPS)*. This important legislation advances pharmacist-led, valued-based healthcare, which is especially crucial for pharmacy care in rural and underserved areas. We also believe ECAPS is a critical step in helping to ensure the survival of community pharmacies, which are essential to healthcare in America.

### **Why ECAPS Matters**

The rate of pharmacy closures has more than doubled in recent years, with nearly 1 in 3 pharmacies closing between 2010 and 2021. Independent pharmacies are threatened by several by several different forces, but perhaps the biggest threat comes from the legacy pharmacy benefits management (PBM) companies. The anticompetitive and self-dealing business practices of the largest PBMs hurt community pharmacies in a variety of ways, including squeezing reimbursement rates, and imposing spread pricing and onerous DIR fees. In addition, the vertically-integrated legacy PBMs compete with independent, community pharmacies by pushing their patients to use their own pharmacy networks, thus cutting out community pharmacies.

The result is that nearly half of U.S. counties are now considered pharmacy deserts, leaving seniors, and others, to drive long distances to access care. ECAPS helps reverse this trend by sustaining and empowering pharmacies, as well as pharmacists, to meet urgent healthcare needs in every corner of America.

ECAPS reinforces the vital collaborative relationship between pharmacists and physicians, ensuring care is delivered with appropriate medical direction while leveraging the accessibility, trust and clinical training of pharmacists. This team-based approach improves outcomes, enhances medication management, and supports chronic care.

Community pharmacies are much more than just drug dispensaries; they serve as vital, trusted healthcare access points. An estimated 58% of Americans say they are likely to first seek non-emergency healthcare at a pharmacy. [According to a 2023 survey, pharmacists rank among the most trusted medical professionals.](#)

The ECAPS legislation enables pharmacists to practice at the top of their license so they can deliver critical services, and receive fair reimbursement. Equally important, the legislation helps independent pharmacies to thrive so they can continue to serve their communities.

### **Why We Support ECAPS**

EmpiRx Health was founded with the radical idea that pharmacists belong at the center of pharmacy care. As a pharmacist-led PBM, we believe:

- Community pharmacies should be preserved, protected and empowered.
- Patients deserve access to local, trusted healthcare providers.
- Community pharmacies must be compensated and reimbursed fairly for the vital healthcare services they provide.

ECAPS aligns perfectly with PATH's mission to break the stranglehold of the traditional PBMs, advance PBM reform, and amplify the role of pharmacists in improving patient health outcomes while lowering costs. We urge policymakers to support H.R. 3164 and protect the future of pharmacy care in America.