



Testimony before House Committee on Health and Human Services  
SB 200 – Scope of Practice  
Testimony in support

March 14, 2022

Madam Chair and members of the Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 200, which would expand the scope of practice for pharmacists to include initiation of therapy for influenza, strep throat, or urinary tract infection pursuant to a statewide protocol adopted by the collaborative drug therapy management advisory committee.

Walmart, one of the largest retailers in America, serves over 160 million customers each week. Walmart has a unique vantage point for the experiences of American consumers as 90% of Americans live within 10 miles of their stores. We at Walmart are committed to the state of Kansas and its prosperity. Our company employs more than 22,500 Kansans and operates 83 stores in the state. In FYE 2021, Walmart collected on behalf of the State of Kansas more than \$423.6 million in sales tax and paid more than \$71.6 million in state and local taxes. Walmart also spent more than \$634.8 million with 445 local Kansas suppliers, supporting more than 19,490 jobs, and donated \$7.6 million to charitable organizations in communities throughout Kansas in FYE 2021. Since 2013, Walmart has hired more than 4,925 Veterans in the state and has promoted more than 900 Veterans. Key components of our retail business involve pharmacy, in-store grocery sales as well as in-home delivery and grocery pickup.

For many Americans, pharmacies are the most accessible providers of health and wellness services and care. In fact, more than 90% of Americans live within five miles of a pharmacy—enabling convenient access to services and care, particularly for those who do not live near medical treatment centers.

This statistic is particularly relevant here in Kansas, where we rank 40th in the country in number of doctors, with only 227.6 active physicians per 100,000 residents. Further compounding this issue, 8 rural Kansas hospitals have closed in the past 15 years leading to reduced healthcare access in rural communities. By empowering the more than 3,400 pharmacists employed in Kansas to provide basic point of care testing and treatment for easily remedied health conditions, we would make it easier for citizens to access crucial healthcare services.

Increasing accessibility to basic health services is not just about convenience—it can be a matter of life and death. Nationally, Streptococcal infections result in 45,000 cases and 2,500 deaths each year. And in Kansas, roughly 2,000 people lose their lives annually as a result of flu-related illnesses.

Permitting pharmacists to conduct Point of Care (POC) testing and treatment will expand access to healthcare for common and easily treated health conditions like influenza and strep. And if pharmacists were empowered to act upon positive point-of-care test results, they could diminish the severity of impact.

Beyond improving accessibility, increasing the scope of practice for pharmacists in Kansas would improve affordability. This applies to both the financial burden that untreated illness places on the healthcare system and the cost of care for patients.

Many times, high costs to healthcare consumers and payors spike when minor illnesses are left untreated due to lack of access to care. Influenza alone costs Americans \$10.4 billion annually in direct costs for hospitalizations and outpatient visits, with an economic burden of \$83.3 billion.

Identifying and treating illnesses early on can result in better long-term health outcomes and therefore diminish the financial impact that severe illness can result in. Many pharmacies are also able provide services at an affordable price point. The impact that affordable pharmacy services could have on citizens of this state is illustrated by a sobering statistic: more than 13% of Kansans report not seeing a doctor in the past 12 months because of cost.

Allowing pharmacists to provide basic testing and treatment services would significantly increase access to affordable healthcare for people in our state. If the last year has taught us anything, it is the crucial role that pharmacists already play as trusted health and wellness providers in our communities.

For almost two years now, pharmacists have been on the front lines of the pandemic, risking their own health to provide crucial services such as Covid-19 testing and vaccination.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, pharmacists were playing a significant role in ensuring that Americans are vaccinated against common and preventable illnesses. In 2018, 32% of adult flu vaccine recipients were administered the vaccine in a store or pharmacy. In 2019 alone, pharmacists administered over 45 million vaccinations across the U.S., with 505,000 administered here in Kansas.

Along with physicians, therapists, nurses, and techs, pharmacists are trusted members of the teams that care for patients in our state. We are well positioned to provide accessible and affordable health services.

By allowing pharmacists to practice at the top of their licenses and provide point of care testing and treatment, you can further empower pharmacists to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

For these reasons, I urge you to support SB 200, and to support pharmacists across Kansas. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on this important topic.

Best Regards,

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Walmart