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Congressional Support for Pharmacists' Services Reaches Critical Numbers

WASHINGTON D.C. — As the Patient Access to Pharmacists' Care Coalition (PAPCC) wraps up a successful American Pharmacists Month, which promotes the valuable contributions that pharmacists make to the healthcare profession, patients, and their communities, the PAPCC is excited to announce a milestone in the growing support for the *Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act* (S. 314/H.R. 592).

Support for expanding Medicare beneficiary access to pharmacist-provided patient care services in medically underserved communities continues to grow. Cosponsorship in the U.S. House of Representatives recently eclipsed 230, confirming that a majority of House members recognize the value that pharmacists can play in providing healthcare services to underserved communities throughout the nation. The U.S. Senate's support is also strong, with cosponsorship now equaling 33.

"This legislation seeks to increase patient access to important health care services, such as health and wellness tests, immunizations, and chronic disease management services by enabling pharmacists to practice to the full extent of their education, training, and license," said Vince Ventimiglia, President at Leavitt Partners and advisor to PAPCC. "We appreciate the leadership of our primary sponsors in the House and Senate, including Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.), Rep. Todd Young (R-Ind.), Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.), Rep. Ron Kind (D-Wis.), Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), Sen. Robert Casey, Jr. (D-Pa.), and Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio). We will continue to work with Congress to enact this important legislation into law."

Millions of seniors live in medically underserved communities in the United States without adequate access to healthcare. However, nearly 95 percent of Americans live within 5 miles of a pharmacy. Pharmacists are highly accessible and highly educated healthcare professionals who, in coordination with other providers on a health team, are capable of playing a greater role in the delivery of healthcare services to underserved patients. While pharmacists' primary focus is assisting patients with access to and information regarding their medications, pharmacists are ready and able to provide additional services needed in underserved communities.

About PAPCC

PAPCC is a multistakeholder and interdisciplinary initiative. Membership is comprised of organizations representing patients, pharmacists, and pharmacies, as well as other interested stakeholders. Our mission is to develop and help enact a federal policy proposal that would enable Medicare beneficiary access to, and payment for, Medicare Part B services by state-licensed pharmacists in medically underserved communities. Our primary goal is to improve medically underserved seniors' access to pharmacists' services consistent with state scope of practice laws and regulations.

For more information, go to PharmacistsCare.org and Congress.gov.