

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jordana Choucair  
jordana.choucair@leavittpartners.com  
801.538.5082

## The Patient Access to Pharmacists' Care Coalition (PAPCC) Encourages Congress to Leverage Pharmacists to Combat the Opioid Epidemic

Washington, D.C., April 11, 2018 - The Patient Access to Pharmacists' Care Coalition (PAPCC) – a group of more than 40 organizations representing patients, pharmacists, and pharmacies, as well as other interested stakeholders – encourages Congress, as they continue developing solutions to address the opioid epidemic, to consider how all members of the health care team can support opioid prevention and treatment.

Despite public and private endeavors, millions of citizens still lack adequate access to primary health care. The current situation will only be exacerbated as the number of Medicare enrollees increases from roughly 50 million to over 80 million<sup>i</sup> and the number of physicians needed to meet the demand simultaneously decreases over the next two decades.<sup>ii</sup> In this environment, it is essential to enable all members of the health care team — including pharmacists — to practice at the top of their license.

Pharmacists play a unique role in patients' care. With 89 percent of Americans living within five miles of a community pharmacy, pharmacists are frequently the health care professional that a patient will see the most.<sup>iii</sup> Given their vast medication expertise and proximity to patients, pharmacists are ready and able to play an important role in helping the health care team address opioid misuse and abuse.

Pharmacists help prescribers develop and adjust medication regimens, help oversee medication treatment plans through transitions of care, are involved in pain management programs that include medication tapering services and transitioning to non-opioid treatments, work in medication assisted treatment programs, and furnish naloxone where authorized. Pharmacists can also provide greater access to community-based programs designed to identify, reduce, and prevent problematic use, abuse, and dependence on alcohol and drugs, including referrals to treatment for those in need.

“Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to support combating opioid addiction through a number of ways,” said Vince Ventimiglia, Vice Chairman of Leavitt Partners Board of Directors and advisor to PAPCC. “Policymakers have an opportunity to empower pharmacists to leverage their expertise and accessibility to help solve this national emergency. The *Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act* would enable pharmacists to help address opioid misuse and abuse and facilitate access to medical and education services that can help solve the problem, in real time — at the local pharmacy.”

**About PAPCC:**

PAPCC is a multi-stakeholder 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 patient access to, and payment for, Medicare Part B services by state-licensed pharmacists in medically underserved communities. Our primary goal is to expand medically-underserved patients' access to pharmacist services consistent with state scope of practice law. For more information go to <http://pharmacistscare.org/>

---

<sup>i</sup> U.S. Congressional Research Service. Medicare Financing (R41436; September 19, 2013), by Patricia A. Davis

<sup>ii</sup> The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections from 2014 to 2015, prepared for the Association of American Medical Colleges, by IHS Inc., April 5, 2016

<sup>iii</sup> NACDS Economics Department Analysis of NCPDP Pharmacy Provider File and U.S. Census Bureau data