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February 7th, 2025

To: Chairman Sutton and House Insurance Committee members, Kansas State Capitol

Opposition to HB 2244 – Protect patient safety and pharmacy integrity

My name is Will Anderson and I am a community pharmacist at Orchards Drug in Lawrence, KS. Independent pharmacies like mine provide critical healthcare services in our communities including dispensing medications, administering vaccinations, conducting health testing, and providing patient education. Our pharmacists are vital healthcare providers, offering expert oversight that ensures patient safety and improves health outcomes.

While I am a strong proponent of increasing access to healthcare, especially in underserved areas, I must oppose HB 2244 as written due to the risks it poses to patient safety and the integrity of pharmacy practice in Kansas.

HB 2244 prohibits the Board of Pharmacy from effectively regulating telepharmacies, allowing them to open anywhere – even where full-service pharmacies already exist. Telepharmacies are staffed by a pharmacy technician and supervised remotely by a pharmacist. Unlike pharmacists, pharmacy technicians lack the clinical training to assess complex patient needs and provide real-time intervention. Working pharmacists routinely intervene in technician operations to ensure quality and safety, and to ensure that communications between a technician and a patient do not exceed the technician's qualifications to answer. Without an on-site pharmacist, patients lose critical access to expert care, increasing the risk of medication errors and poor health outcomes.

A mileage restriction (i.e. telepharmacies cannot be located within 20 miles of another pharmacy) ensures that telepharmacies only serve areas without existing access. Prohibiting mileage restrictions allows telepharmacies to proliferate in communities that already have access to full-service pharmacies, introducing safety risk without any benefit to patient access. This bill benefits large, profit-motivated corporations at the expense of patient safety and quality care.

HB 2244 also proposes extreme changes to the Kansas Board of Pharmacy, including the abrupt termination of all board members and changes to the appointments process. The Board of Pharmacy exists to protect the public against the unqualified practice of pharmacy and ensure patient safety. These changes would disrupt pharmacy oversight, remove experienced regulators, and weaken the Board's ability to uphold safety standards. The current, time-tested process of Governor appointments with staggered termination dates is effective and similar to the process used by other healthcare boards in Kansas. Pharmacy regulation should prioritize patient welfare, not political restructuring.

HB 2244 prioritizes corporate interests over patient safety, replacing pharmacist oversight with an unchecked system that introduces unnecessary risks without the benefit of improved access. I urge you to oppose this bill and protect the quality of pharmacy care in Kansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'WA' followed by a stylized flourish.

Will Anderson, Pharm.D.
Pharmacist-in-charge, co-owner
Orchards Drug