

Proponent Testimony for SB 284
Senate Financial Institutions & Insurance Committee
March 5, 2025
Brittany Wessels
Director of Pharmacy, Heartland Community Health Center

Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding Senate Bill 284. My name is Brittany Wessels, and I am the Director of Pharmacy at Heartland Community Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Lawrence, KS.

It is estimated that 1 in 5 adults⁵ and 1 in 7 children⁴ are diagnosed with a mental health condition while 42% of Americans are managing two or more chronic diseases such as heart disease or diabetes³. Medication non-adherence can lead to treatment failure, hospitalizations, and causes approximately 125,000 deaths each year in the United States^{1,2}. Community health centers, like Heartland, improve medication adherence and the health outcomes of Kansas communities using the 340B Program to increase access to affordable medications and crucial healthcare services to the most vulnerable Kansans.

Drug manufacturers have spent the last three years working to undermine the 340B Program. Manufacturers have attempted to limit the number of pharmacies a covered entity can contract with as well as where 340B covered medications can be shipped. When covered entities are unable to access the 340B Program through critical contract pharmacy arrangements patients have less access to low-cost affordable medications, lose the freedom to choose the pharmacy best suited to provide them care, and risk losing access to vital services that health centers provide using the savings received from the 340B Program.

At Heartland, we have been able to use our 340B savings to help cover the cost of uncompensated care, offer free prescription delivery to reduce transportation barriers to accessing medications, increase access to substance use disorder treatment in our community, and offer a robust integrated care model that connects patients to resources like housing and food pantries. As a healthcare provider I have been able to witness first-hand patients brought to tears by being able to afford to fill their prescriptions for the first time in years. I have seen a patient start their journey at the health center uninsured, experiencing homelessness, struggling with mental health issues and unable to

¹ January 2018. U.S. Pharmacist <https://www.uspharmacist.com/article/medication-adherence-the-elephant-in-the-room>

² January 2024. American Heart Association <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/medication-information/medication-adherence-taking-your-meds-as-directed>

³ February 2024. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2024/23_0267.htm

⁴ January 2025. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/children-mental-health/data-research/index.html>

⁵ September 2024. National Institute of Mental Health <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>

afford medications. Heartland was able to provide mental health care for this patient, connect them with housing resources, and ensure affordable access to necessary medications. Thanks to the services afforded by the 340B Program, this patient is now housed, has a stable job with insurance, and is able to continue to access mental health care and essential medication. This is just one example of the countless patients who benefit every day from the 340B Program at Heartland. Without protections for the 340B Program drug manufacturers will continue to impose restrictions unilaterally that harm patients and Kansas communities.

The 340B Program strengthens the healthcare safety net in Kansas, improves the health and well-being of our communities, and does not use tax dollars or cost the taxpayers money. That is why I am asking the committee to vote yes on Senate Bill 284.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brittany Wessels, PharmD, 340B ACE, AAHIVP

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