



March 14, 2022

Kansas House Committee of Health and Human Services
RE: Senate Bill 200

Madame Chair Landwehr and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity (AFP), I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 200. AFP activists engage friends and neighbors on key issues and advocate for building a patient-centered health care system that lowers costs, increases choices, and improves access for millions of people seeking relief. The reforms outlined in the bill to expand the prescribing authority of pharmacists would promote all these important goals.

Over the past several years, pharmacists have played an important role in delivering essential health care, largely thanks to common-sense reforms lawmakers implemented to combat the pandemic. Since April 2020, Governor Laura Kelly has issued multiple executive orders authorizing pharmacists to provide care for routine health maintenance, chronic care management, and other services without authorization from a physician.ⁱ In addition, the Trump Administration issued emergency guidance authorizing pharmacists to freely order and administer COVID-19 tests to patients around the country.ⁱⁱ

This proposal would expand on these reforms by authorizing pharmacists to prescribe and administer a variety of essential, low-risk medications that meet four conditions: 1) do not require a new diagnosis, 2) are minor and self-limiting, 3) have a low-risk test to identify the condition (e.g., flu, strep throat), or 4) present an immediate danger and require quick treatment.

Kansas' pharmacists have received years of comprehensive training and education that effectively prepare them to initiate these drug therapies. Since 2000, every individual who has entered the pharmacist profession has completed a four-year doctorate of pharmacy (PharmD) degree that includes core competencies in pharmaceutical, behavioral, and clinical sciences. After receiving a PharmD degree, pharmacists must also undergo a one to two-year residency to obtain further training in one of 14 specialties, including oncology, cardiology, infectious disease, and pediatric pharmacy.ⁱⁱⁱ

Pharmacists consistently demonstrate they deliver high-quality care when lawmakers allow them to freely practice their profession. Numerous studies show pharmacists who prescribe medication and initiate drug therapies lower blood pressure, decrease cholesterol, reduce hypertension, and improve other health indicators among their patients.^{iv vii}

This proposal would empower Kansas' pharmacies to deliver these essential services and

significantly expand health care access to Kansas' residents, especially families in rural communities. The National Association of Chain Drug Stores reports nine-out-of-ten families live within two miles of a community pharmacy. Pharmacies often operate in grocery and department stores, making them a convenient destination for working families with busy schedules.^{vii} Making these services available in these convenient locations would extend access to the 780,000 Kansans struggling to receive care in the state's primary care shortage areas.^{viii}

Other states have recognized pharmacists can effectively address their health care challenges and have enacted these commonsense reforms. In recent years, Idaho, Montana, Florida, North Carolina, and New Mexico have also authorized pharmacists to prescribe and administer an expanded array of important drug therapies to treat routine and chronic patient conditions. Kansas' families would reap enormous benefits once Kansas' pharmacists receive the authorization to deliver these services.^{ix}

This committee can ensure more families receive the high quality and affordable health care they need by empowering health care professionals to deliver more virtual care. Please vote "Yes" on this bill in committee to strengthen health care access and lower costs.

We thank you for the opportunity to address this critical issue and we look forward to working with the committee to craft real reforms that expand access to affordable and high-quality health care for all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Patton

State Director

Americans for Prosperity-KS

ⁱ <https://governor.kansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EO-22-01-Medical-Services-Executed.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://public3.pagefreeser.com/browse/HHS%20%E2%80%93%20About%20News/20-01-2021T12:29/https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/04/08/hhs-statements-on-authorizing-licensed-pharmacists-to-order-and-administer-covid-19-tests.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.bpsweb.org/bps-specialties/>

^{iv} <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24721801/>

^v <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/211442>

^{vi} <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24966032/>

^{vii} <https://drugstorenews.com/secure-file/37324>

^{viii} <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/primary-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22collId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

^{ix} <https://www.goodrx.com/hcp/pharmacists/prescriber-authority-for-pharmacists>