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ISSUE BRIEF

Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act (H.R. 1770/S. 2477)

BACKGROUND

The *Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services (ECAPS) Act* (H.R. 1770/S. 2477) is an important bipartisan bill that ensures patients maintain access to essential pharmacist services and strengthens America's public health preparedness by implementing lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *ECAPS Act* makes permanent COVID-era authorities related to pharmacist patient care services, including testing, vaccination, and administration of prophylactic treatment. The Department of Health & Human Services granted pharmacists the ability to perform these services using authorities in the Public Health Service Act and Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act. It also automatically allows pharmacists to perform these services during future public health emergencies. The current pharmacist authorities are set to expire in 2023 and 2024, which will lead to confusion and disruptions in patient care. The *ECAPS Act* also allows these services to be covered and reimbursed under Medicare Part B, which ultimately enables more patients to access these services through their pharmacy.

With nearly 90% of Americans living within five miles of a pharmacy, pharmacists have played a key role in America's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency by ordering and administering COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines, as well as providing services to prevent the spread of influenza, Respiratory Syncytial Virus, and strep throat. Pharmacists participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program have administered over 300 million COVID-19 vaccines, preventing over 1 million deaths and 8 million hospitalizations.

AMCP'S Urges Passage of the ECAPS Act

AMCP supports the *Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act*. This bill will help ensure that Americans can continue to rely on pharmacists for essential and potentially lifesaving COVID-19 care. The *ECAPS Act* will also improve patient access to vaccines, tests, and treatments by authorizing pharmacists to provide these services and receive reimbursement under Medicare Part B. The *ECAPS Act* addresses disparities in public health preparedness in medically underserved communities like rural areas by allowing these patients to seek care from their most accessible provider.

AMCP calls on Members of Congress to cosponsor and ultimately enact the *Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act* (H.R. 1770/S. 2477), which will preserve access to essential care administered by pharmacists and increase the country's readiness for future public health emergencies.

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