



February 14, 2024

Neera Tanden
Director
Domestic Policy Council
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Director Tanden.

As the Executive Vice President and CEO of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), and on behalf of our nation's over 334,000 pharmacists,¹ I am reaching out to ask for your support to help protect seniors' access to essential pharmacist-provided patient care and maintain America's public health response and infrastructure - which according to [government data](#) has prevented >1 million deaths, >8 million hospitalizations, and saved over \$450 billion in healthcare costs during the recent COVID-19 pandemic.²

President Biden has directed the Domestic Policy Council (DPC) to craft and implement cross-cutting healthcare policies and to coordinate policy throughout the federal government that brings greater equity and prosperity to the everyday lives of Americans. As you know, to address health equity disparities, patients have come to expect that they can access vital healthcare services provided at their local pharmacy, particularly [in underserved Black and Hispanic/Latino communities](#), where the neighborhood pharmacy may be the only healthcare provider for miles.

APhA has worked directly with Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra to protect access to vital healthcare services provided by our nation's pharmacists due to federal Declarations under the federal Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act. However, some of the federal authorities under the PREP Act expired on May 11, 2023, and other authorities will be expiring under the [Eleventh Amendment](#) in December 2024,³ **which will interrupt access for millions of patients who have come to rely on pharmacy personnel to administer life-saving immunizations and treatments that reduce expensive and unnecessary hospitalizations.**

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/pharmacists.htm>

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1544319122002795?dgcid=author.>

³ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/05/12/2023-10216/eleventh-amendment-to-declaration-under-the-public-readiness-and-emergency-preparedness-act-for>

APhA, and over [190 patient and other health care professional organizations](#),⁴ supports bipartisan, bicameral legislation ([S.2477/H.R.1770](#)),⁵ the Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act. The Act establishes coverage for Medicare beneficiaries' access to testing, treatment and immunization services for common respiratory conditions that disproportionately affect underserved communities who lack access to care as well as immunization services. We know from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that nine in ten Americans live within 5 miles of a pharmacy, and patients visit their community pharmacist approximately twice as frequently as they visit primary care physicians. **I am requesting for the DPC to directly support the passage of this life-saving legislation (S.2477/H.R. 2770) with Senate and House leadership to help achieve the President's health equity goals.**

APhA is actively engaged with the Biden Administration to achieve many of the President's healthcare goals, including the Gender Policy Council's efforts to increase access to contraceptive care; the White House Office of National AIDS Policy's efforts to maximize the use of community pharmacies to prevent HIV; the White House Office of Pandemic Preparedness & Response's efforts to utilize pharmacies to strengthen adult immunization infrastructure, and many others. We also understand that the White House may be interested in engaging pharmacists in bringing an end to the opioid epidemic. **Accordingly, I would also like to offer APhA as a facilitator for a regular meeting cadence between the DPC and the pharmacy community to advance these vital healthcare issues for our country.**

Thank you for your continuing leadership and service to our nation. Please contact Michael Baxter at mbaxter@aphanet.org and my Executive Assistant Monica White at mwhite@aphanet.org to arrange a meeting on how pharmacy can help move our country forward at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Hogue, PharmD, FAPhA, FNAP, FFIP
Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President

⁴ <https://pharmacycare.org/more-than-190-groups-applaud-bipartisan-federal-legislation-to-ensure-senior-access-to-essential-pharmacist-services-strengthen-our-nations-public-health-response/>

⁵ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/1770/text?s=1&r=1&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22hr1770%22%7D>