



January 30, 2024

Senator Thomas “TJ” Shope, Jr.
Chairman
Arizona Senate Committee on
Health and Human Services
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Senator Janae Shamp
Vice-Chairman
Arizona Senate Committee on
Health and Human Services
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: Support for SB 1085 – Enhancing Public Access to Pharmacist Testing and Treatment Services for Certain Health Conditions

Dear Senator Shope and Senator Shamp,

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) is writing in support of SB 1085 – important legislation supporting public access to essential healthcare services through community pharmacies. This bill will expand healthcare options and capacity across the state, in addition to helping improve health outcomes, access, cost-effectiveness, and health equity. Specifically, SB 1085 would authorize pharmacists to offer routine testing for health conditions such as flu; strep throat; and COVID-19, in addition to providing appropriate treatment based on testing results – streamlining the process for people to receive testing and treatment in one place.

SB 1085 will also allow pharmacists to leverage the expertise of pharmacy technicians to support public access to pharmacist-provided services, and the legislation also requires equitable coverage and reimbursement for pharmacists’ services to help sustain access for the public. Research on pharmacist-led “testing and treatment” models demonstrates unequivocal patient safety, adherence to evidence-based guidelines, and cost-effectiveness.¹ For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, pharmacy interventions averted over 1 million deaths, over 8 million hospitalizations, and saved approximately \$450 billion in healthcare costs.²

The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic cemented the public’s reliance on community pharmacies for “test and treat” services. During the pandemic, the federal government authorized pharmacists to broaden access to “test and treat” services for COVID-19. These federal flexibilities temporarily remedied regional differences in pharmacist authority to support national access to COVID-19 testing and treatment options. As a result, communities have become accustomed to having increased access to pharmacy testing services. By permanently authorizing pharmacy personnel to deliver “test and treat” services for COVID-19 and other common conditions, SB 1085 will allow the public to continue to receive the care that they now expect at their local pharmacy. States like Idaho, Alaska, and Colorado have already acted to authorize the types of “test and treat” pharmacy services that would be allowed under SB 1085.

Importantly, the people of Arizona support the policies³ in SB 1085:

- **85%** of adults in Arizona say pharmacists are **easy to access**, the highest percentage of the tested options.

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31474527/>

<https://www.ajmc.com/view/cost-effectiveness-of-pharmacist-provided-treatment-of-adult-pharyngitis>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9387064/>

³ A poll commissioned by NACDS and conducted by Morning Consult, October 25-30, 2023. [NACDS Access Agenda](#).

- **78%** of adults in Arizona believe it's important for their state to update its policies to ensure that patients permanently have the same **access to pharmacy vaccination, testing, and treatment** services that were available during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **73%** of adults in Arizona support pharmacists **testing for and treating common illnesses** like flu and COVID.
- **71%** of adults in Arizona support private and government insurers **adequately paying pharmacists** for testing and initiating treatment in states where pharmacists are authorized to do so.

In summary, pharmacies remain a critical healthcare access point for many Americans to receive essential healthcare services – including across medically underserved areas, and among both rural and urban communities. **NACDS urges your support to pass SB 1085 so that the people of Arizona maintain enhanced healthcare access options in their local communities.** If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact NACDS' Sandra Guckian, Vice President, State Pharmacy and Advocacy, at sguckian@nacds.org or 703-837-4195.

Sincerely,



Steven C. Anderson, FASAE, CAE, IOM
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Association of Chain Drug Stores

CC: Members of the Arizona Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Attachment: [NACDS Access Agenda- Arizona](#)

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NACDS represents traditional drug stores, supermarkets and mass merchants with pharmacies. Chains operate nearly 40,000 pharmacies, and NACDS' chain member companies include regional chains, with a minimum of four stores, and national companies. Chains employ nearly 3 million individuals, including 155,000 pharmacists. They fill over 3 billion prescriptions yearly, and help patients use medicines correctly and safely, while offering innovative services that improve patient health and healthcare affordability. NACDS members also include more than 900 supplier partners and over 70 international members representing 21 countries. Please visit NACDS.org.