

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2024

Phillip Swagel, Ph.D.
Director
Congressional Budget Office
402 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Director Swagel:

As Co-Chairs of the Congressional Bipartisan Rural Health Caucus and strong supporters of H.R. 1770, the Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act (ECAPS Act), we are writing to inquire about your anticipated timeline for completing the process of scoring the bill. We understand that the committees of jurisdiction sent the bill to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) as early as last June and that CBO met with a group of stakeholders in August to address any questions the agency had regarding the bill. Despite those efforts, the bill has languished since then, hindering the ability of the committees of jurisdiction to move forward with consideration of the legislation.

The ECAPS Act would create a payment pathway for pharmacists under Medicare Part B for the delivery of services related to largely respiratory conditions that patients — especially those in rural areas — have come to depend on receiving at their local pharmacy, the most accessible and often most trusted point of care. The legislation would only allow for Medicare coverage only to the extent state scope of practice laws allow for pharmacists to deliver such services, ensuring that those most vulnerable to these conditions, our seniors, are not left behind as Medicaid and commercial insurers provide coverage to younger beneficiaries. The bill has more than 100 co-sponsors in the House, evenly divided between the two parties, reflecting its strong, bipartisan support.

More than 9 in 10 Americans live within 5 miles of their local pharmacy and 77% of community pharmacists serve populations areas of 50,000 or fewer, reflecting the crucial role these facilities play in providing access to care in underserved areas. America's seniors, and all of its patients, need the ECAPS Act to ensure they will be able to access to these vital services moving forward, and Congress needs an accurate, timely CBO score in order to give this bill the consideration it deserves.

We request a prompt response in writing with an estimated timeline for completing a score of H.R. 1770, and any other relevant information including whether CBO needs any additional information from stakeholders or other agencies to complete the scoring process, or if there are other obstacles to completing the scoring process we might help you address.

Sincerely,



Diana Harshbarger
Member of Congress



Jill Tokuda
Member of Congress