



CONTACT: Loretta Boesing
Founder of Unite for Safe Medications
loretta@uniteforsafemeds.com
573-267-2112

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**PATIENT, PROVIDER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS UNITE TO PROTEST
EXPRESS SCRIPTS POLICIES THAT LIMIT PATIENT ACCESS TO CARE**

**Hundreds Expected to Turn Out for Historic Demonstration at Express Scripts' St. Louis
Headquarters Organized by Unite for Safe Medications**

ST. LOUIS, MO (April 26, 2024) - Some 300 or more patients, pharmacists and community advocates will gather on Friday May 17, 2024 at Express Scripts' corporate offices to protest years of questionable practices that have resulted in volumes of documented cases of patient harm; independent pharmacy closures and little evidence of cost savings at the pharmacy counter, contrary to promises made by Express Scripts and its fellow "Big 3" pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs).

Organized by St. Louis-based **Unite for Safe Medications** ([USFM](#)) a grassroots nonprofit advocacy organization, the peaceful demonstration will take place from 9 a.m to 1 p.m and seeks to pressure Express Scripts to end the following practices:

- **PBM Steering Towards Their Own Pharmacies:** Express Scripts and its fellow PBMs direct patients to their own mail and retail pharmacies, limiting access to local independent community pharmacies. This "steering" is driven by profit motives, not cost savings or safety concerns for patients.
- **Drug Pricing Manipulation and Rebate Schemes:** PBMs increase drug prices and withhold savings from patients and pharmacies through pricing manipulation and rebate schemes. PBMs, who act as middlemen between health plans and pharmacies, wield immense power over drug pricing, coverage decisions, and pharmacy reimbursements. Unfortunately, this power is often abused, putting patients and communities at risk.

- **Impeding Patient Access to Medication:** PBMs obstruct patient access to medication through limited lists of covered medications or formularies. Formularies are often built upon which drug manufacturers will provide the largest kickback to the PBM and not the medication that will be most affordable or medically appropriate for the patient.
- **Accelerating Pharmacy Closures Due to PBM Financial Pressures, Resulting in Pharmacy Deserts:** Across the nation, independent pharmacies are facing a wave of closures due to inadequate reimbursements from PBMs at the same time thousands of corporate retail pharmacy closures are already happening. These closures disproportionately impact underserved communities, creating "pharmacy deserts" where access to essential medications becomes difficult. It is estimated that **30% of local community pharmacies in America may close this year** due to these practices.

"Countless patients and pharmacists are devastated by the loss of their local pharmacies," said USFM founder and protest organizer Loretta Boesing. "Safe and convenient access to medications is vital, and these closures are a public health crisis. We must unite to protect them and patients from the destructive practices of PBMs."

Patient and provider organizations participating in the protest include Pharmacists United for Truth and Transparency; AIDS Healthcare Foundation; Arthritis Center STL; National Community Pharmacists Association; American Pharmacists Association; Missouri Pharmacy Association, Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations, Illinois Pharmacy Association, American Economic Liberties Project, Patients Rising, WayPointRx IG

About Loretta Boesing

Loretta Boesing's passion for safe medication was ignited when her son, who relies on daily medication following a life-saving organ transplant, was thrown into transplant rejection and nearly lost his life. Upon investigation, she discovered her son's medication - which had arrived via mail order on a scorching summer day wrapped only in a bag - had been rendered ineffective from heat exposure. The Boesing family's insurance mandated mail order pharmacy.

Her son's health scare led Ms. Boesing to uncover widespread problems with PBMs, including medication delivery delays; understaffing at PBM-owned corporate chain pharmacies; and the startling discovery that her health plan's PBM reimbursed its own mail order pharmacy significantly more than her local pharmacy for the same medication for a "lower copay".

Ms. Boesing started a petition with over 220,000 supporters to stop forcing the use of mail order pharmacies. She routinely travels across the U.S. speaking to state boards of pharmacies and other organizations to empower patients' right of pharmacy choice.

About Unite for Safe Medications

[Unite for Safe Medications](http://www.uniteforsafemeds.org) is a nonprofit organization that seeks to save lives and advance patient outcomes by improving access, quality, and safety of pharmaceutical care. For more information, please visit www.uniteforsafemeds.org.