



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PHARMACISTS APPLAUD OLIVERSON'S LEADERSHIP ON PBM REFORM

AUSTIN -- The Alliance of Independent Pharmacists of Texas applauds state Rep. Tom Oliverson, M.D. (R-Cypress) for his ongoing national leadership in the effort to protect patients and pharmacies from the harmful business practices of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs).

At a meeting last week of the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) in Oklahoma City, Dr. Oliverson played a key role in passing model legislation that would reform PBMs in order provide protections for pharmacists and patients who receive pharmacy benefits through commercial plans. Dr. Oliverson's efforts further established him as a national leader among those who have raised concerns about PBMs' business practices.

PBMs serve as middlemen between insurers and pharmacies by managing pharmacy benefits for nearly 95 percent of all Americans with health care coverage. PBMs have broad discretion to administer benefits and negotiate with drug manufacturers for rebates and drug costs, for example, but they operate in one of the least regulated sectors of our health care system. A small number of PBMs control the marketplace, and their decisions on pricing and reimbursements are shrouded in secrecy.

As the Vice Chairman of NCOIL's Committee on Health, Long-Term Care and Health Retirement Issues, Dr. Oliverson played a key role in advancing model legislation to give states a guide for bringing transparency and accountability to PBMs' anti-competitive practices. The model legislation calls for states to have more oversight of PBMs in order to protect patients access to needed medications and reduce the red tape that small pharmacies face in serving their communities.

Many PBMs are owned by managed care organizations.

"Community pharmacists and the patients we serve are grateful for Dr. Oliverson's strong national leadership on this issue," said Lee Ann Hampton, R.Ph. of Paris, the president of the Alliance of Independent Pharmacists of Texas. "PBMs are increasing their profits by driving up costs on patients and independent pharmacies, and the small business owners

who run pharmacies across Texas are hopeful the Texas Legislature will look closely at the ways PBMs unnecessarily meddle in health care decisions.”

Independent pharmacists from across Texas plan to visit with legislators throughout the upcoming session about the need for practical, sensible reforms that would provide needed oversight and reduce PBM interference in the relationship among doctors, patients and pharmacists.

“As a medical provider himself, Dr. Oliverson understands and appreciates the sanctity of the doctor-patient-pharmacist relationship,” Hampton said. “Pharmacists are grateful he is committed to curbing the abuses of PBMs and the increased costs they have created in our health care system.”

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The Alliance of Independent Pharmacists of Texas (Alliance) is a non-profit committed to advancing the interests of community pharmacists, which represents approximately 2,000 small businesses across Texas. The Alliance is an affiliate of the Texas Pharmacy Association and National Community Pharmacists Association in D.C.

For the latest news and information on the Alliance, follow the Alliance on Twitter (@AIP_Texas) and Like the Alliance on Facebook.com/AIPTexas.

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