

May 8, 2020

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
United States House of Representatives
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Maloney:

Thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and for the introduction of the “Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act” (H.R. 6720). The pharmacy community is appreciative of your efforts to recognize the important work healthcare workers are doing to respond to this pandemic. However, the pharmacy community is concerned that the legislation does not explicitly recognize pharmacists as frontline healthcare workers. Pharmacists in hospitals, clinics, and community pharmacy settings are all playing critical frontline roles, as patient care providers, in the COVID-19 response.

Pharmacists are highly skilled, licensed healthcare professionals that play a key role in selecting and optimizing medication therapy for patients, as well as overseeing the entire medication-use process. As members of interprofessional healthcare teams, pharmacists provide a broad range of patient care services during the COVID-19 public health emergency, from directly caring for mechanically ventilated patients in critical care settings, to providing point-of-care testing and medication management to patients in community pharmacy settings. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has recognized the important role of pharmacists in our nation’s pandemic response, by authorizing pharmacists to conduct COVID-19 testing. In recent weeks, we have seen states and the federal government leveraging pharmacists to expand access to care in response to the pandemic. Those pharmacists put their own health at risk to care for their patients, and they deserve to be recognized, with other patient care providers, as heroes.

We respectfully request that you amend the language of H.R. 6720 to include pharmacists in the student loan forgiveness program. Your consideration of this matter would be an important step toward recognizing the role pharmacists play as frontline healthcare workers, and will support pharmacists as they treat patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

ASHP (American Society of Health-System Pharmacists)
ACPE (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education)
ACCP (American College of Clinical Pharmacy)
NASPA (National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations)
CPNP (College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists)
NCPA (National Community Pharmacists Association)
NACDS (National Association of Chain Drug Stores)
ASCP (American Society of Consultant Pharmacists)
NPhA (National Pharmaceutical Association)
AACP (American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy)
HOPA (Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association)