

Jeff Hochberg

President of Vermont Retail Druggists

Senate Health and Welfare Committee:

Feb 16, 2022

The Vermont Retail Druggists expresses their support of the Language in Section 9 allowing continued flexibility in the refill process at community pharmacies across the State, during the pandemic. These are highly dynamic times and the threat we face as a State is still ever present. Coupled with the concern that community pharmacies are closing their doors at an alarming rate, the committee should focus its consideration on maintaining patient access at all costs. Facts are that extended day supplies (90 days) are not as prevalent across the entirety of the market and in many cases, simply not appropriate. The pharmacists and pharmacies are still responsible to the duties under their respective licensure. The Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) still actively oversees the practice of the profession and ensures public safety. The procedures employed by the Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) relating to their governance of pharmacy dispensation have not ceased. Audit and Prior Authorization tools are active to help control cost and abuse. Lastly, the “early fill” override has not been widely utilized by pharmacies in the State. However, it does create a level of comfort to those patients that do have access issues or are fearfully given the current environment.

Thank you for the Committee’s continued efforts during these unprecedented times.

Jeffrey Hochberg