



December 5, 2022

We are writing to express our support for West Virginia's active military members and retired veterans. As pharmacists, we have proudly provided patient care to these esteemed Americans covered by TRICARE. Regrettably, the decisions of Express Scripts (ESI), the pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) hired to administer their benefits have left thousands of active and retired military members without access to pharmacy services and medications at local pharmacies.

Pharmacists, who have proven our accessibility and dependability as healthcare providers, have been cut out of providing care! This unilateral decision by ESI reduces the choice of pharmacies from 50,000 to 35,000 pharmacies nationally, thus effectively lowering access to these valuable resources for our veterans in the beautiful state of West Virginia. Access is already a concern in our rural state as many areas do not currently have even one pharmacy in a 10-mile radius; meanwhile, 76.5 percent of pharmacies in rural areas are independent community pharmacies, which is why this decision is troubling to our TRICARE residents in West Virginia.

Furthermore, the Cigna/Express Scripts contracts were offered at ridiculous rates much lower than medication acquisition costs, forcing even a national grocery chain to reject the terms of these contracts, and especially difficult for community pharmacies in small towns throughout West Virginia. Unfortunately, Express Scripts/Cigna was not willing to negotiate terms that would benefit TRICARE recipients and the local pharmacies that provide care to them currently.

ESI is not willing to negotiate terms and maintain network adequacy and is selfishly self-referring through network contraction more patients to utilize their own mail order. West Virginia has one of the highest per capita populations of veterans in the country, and Cigna/Express Scripts is leaving about 144 thousand veterans without local access to their pharmacies.

TRICARE patients certainly have earned their benefits by serving our country. These patients have a right to retain local access to their healthcare needs. Yet, an overwhelming number of pharmacies cannot afford to offer these patients their covered medication. We urge you to ensure that all pharmacies in the 2022 TRICARE network remain there in 2023 with the 2022 terms and conditions. Without your support, access for our veterans is cut short.

Sincerely,

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