

NEWS RELEASE

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NCPA: Walmart Medicare Drug Plan a Prescription for Poor Pharmacy Care

Plan Penalizes Seniors Who Prefer Independent Pharmacies Over Walmart

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (Oct. 1, 2010) – Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., the world’s largest corporation, today announced a Medicare prescription drug plan that imposes higher co-payments on seniors who choose to continue using their trusted local, community pharmacy.

In response to the Humana Walmart-Preferred Rx Plan, National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) President and Arlington, Texas pharmacy owner Joseph H. Harmison, PD, issued the following statement:

“This is simply Walmart’s latest ‘loss leader,’ intended to bring more people through its doors at the expense of patient care and quality customer service. Patients taking a brand name drug or who can’t or don’t want to take a therapeutic substitute for the drug their doctor prescribed may see little, if any, savings. What’s more, patients are being financially coerced to get their medications at Walmart stores which make up less than seven percent of all of the retail pharmacies in the U.S.

“The newly released [J.D. Power and Associates 2010 National Pharmacy Study](#) affirms that patients continue to give Walmart pharmacies very poor marks. The company garnered industry-low customer satisfaction ratings for both its retail and mail order pharmacies.

“The negative views patients have toward Walmart pharmacy persist despite high profile, multi-million dollar campaigns, such as promoting \$4 generic drugs. In fact, many independent community pharmacists saw patients return to their pharmacies once they experienced the wait times and assembly-line service first-hand.

“By contrast, [independent community pharmacies earned among the highest customer satisfaction scores](#) of all pharmacies. That’s due in large part to the sterling customer service and competitive pricing that these local pharmacies offer. The relationships independent pharmacists have with their patients also greatly encourage better patient adherence to their prescribed medication regimen, which can lower overall health care costs.

“As NCPA reviews the Walmart plan, we intend on reading the fine print. For example, we want to ensure the plan adheres to Medicare’s marketing and plan guidelines. We also will learn more about how the plan may disadvantage other pharmacies and their patients and will respond accordingly.”

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The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA®) represents America's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 22,700 independent community pharmacies, pharmacy franchises, and chains. Together they represent an \$88 billion health-care marketplace, employ over 65,000 pharmacists, and dispense over 40% of all retail prescriptions. To learn more go to www.ncpanet.org or read NCPA's blog, The Dose, at <http://ncpanet.wordpress.com>.