

# Report for September 2023 Survey of Independent Pharmacy Owners/Managers

## Executive summary:

The National Community Pharmacists Association surveyed roughly 10,000 independent pharmacy owners and managers between Sept. 18-26, 2023. The survey produced approximately 380 responses. Questions focused on potential closures of chain pharmacies, what's happening with COVID-19, and whether these pharmacies are planning to carry over-the-counter naloxone. It also asked about any issues with drug shortages and staffing.

## Key findings:

- 43 percent of respondents say they are located near a major pharmacy chain store that is cutting hours and closing stores as part of cost-saving strategies. 22 percent don't believe they are near one of these stores, and 35 percent aren't sure.
- Of those who confirmed they are located near an affected chain store:
  - A strong majority (nearly 90 percent) say they are able to absorb and provide care for patients who were going to that store.
  - 61 percent are actively working to attract those patients by increasing their advertising budget and targeting their marketing efforts. Respondents also say word of mouth and independent pharmacy's positive reputation are helping attract customers.
- Low reimbursement from pharmacy benefit managers is the top concern that would make it harder to compete for or accept chain pharmacy patients, followed by a need for more staff and resources. Additional concerns include patient steering and pharmacy network contracting issues with insurers and programs like Tricare.
- 83 percent intend to carry updated COVID-19 vaccines when they are able, and 73 percent report an increase in sales of COVID tests.
- Regarding drug products:
  - GLP-1 agonists - a class of medications utilized in the treatment of type 2 diabetes and obesity - are difficult to acquire, with 85 percent saying they're experiencing a shortage.
  - 94 percent report shortages of Adderall or generics, continuing the trend observed within recent survey results.
  - 85 percent are planning to carry Narcan naloxone nasal spray, which was recently approved as an over-the-counter opioid overdose treatment.
- 58 percent say they are having a difficult time filling open staff positions. Pharmacy technicians continue to be in the highest demand (87 percent), followed by clerks/front-end staff (41 percent), pharmacists (32 percent), and delivery drivers (17 percent).