

# Beyond Anecdotes: Numbers on Pharmacy Closures



Pharmacy closures across the country are increasingly tied to the opaque and predatory practices of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). **These middlemen – who manage prescription drug benefits on behalf of insurers and control 80 percent of the prescription drug market** – have come under scrutiny by the Federal Trade Commission, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, numerous state legislatures, and more, as well as by notable publications such as the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

**Independent pharmacies are being squeezed** by delayed payments, unpredictable clawbacks, below-cost reimbursements, and take-it-or-leave-it contract terms that make it nearly impossible to operate sustainably. **PBMs continue to prioritize profits while independent pharmacies shut their doors**, resulting in a growing number of pharmacy deserts and a shrinking number of access points to health care.

#### SOURCES:

1. Federal Trade Commission. FTC releases second interim staff report on prescription drug middlemen. January 2025
2. Guadamuz JS, Alexander GC, Kanter GP, Qato DM. More US Pharmacies Closed Than Opened In 2018-21; Independent Pharmacies, Those In Black, Latinx Communities Most At Risk. Health Aff (Millwood). 2024 Dec;43(12):1703-1711. doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2024.00192. PMID: 39626155
3. IQVIA
4. Qato DM, Alexander GC, Chakraborty A, Guadamuz JS, Jackson JW. Association Between Pharmacy Closures and Adherence to Cardiovascular Medications Among Older US Adults. JAMA Netw Open. 2019 Apr 5;2(4):e192606. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.2606. PMID: 31002324; PMCID: PMC6481442
5. Wolters Kluwer. Pharmacy Next: Consumer medication worries amid pharmacy closures. Wolters Kluwer. Published October 26, 2023. Accessed April 14, 2025. <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/news/pharmacy-next-consumer-medication-worries-amid-pharmacy-closures>
6. NCPA survey

From 2017 to 2022, **PBMs received \$7.3 billion in revenue** from markups.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly **one in three retail pharmacies have closed** since 2010.<sup>2</sup>

**Closure rates were higher in predominantly Black (38 percent) and Latino (36 percent) neighborhoods**, compared to 28 percent in predominantly white areas.<sup>2</sup>

There were **3,250 net fewer retail pharmacies in 2024** than four years ago.<sup>3</sup>

**Pharmacy closures are linked to decreased medication adherence**, with studies showing a 5-8 percent drop in adherence to cardiovascular medications among older adults following a local pharmacy closure.<sup>4</sup>

**Closures contribute to pharmacy deserts, limiting access to essential services** like vaccinations, contraceptives, and treatments for conditions such as HIV and opioid use disorder.

**59 percent of Americans fear losing access to essential medications** amid retail pharmacy closures.<sup>5</sup>

**30.3 percent of independent pharmacists said they are considering closing** their business in Calendar Year 2025.<sup>6</sup>

THE MESSAGE FROM CLOSING PHARMACIES IS CLEAR:  
**REIN IN PREDATORY PBM PRACTICES.**

