



To: Members of the Frontline Worker Pay Working Group

From: The Minnesota Pharmacy Alliance  
The Minnesota Pharmacists Association  
The Minnesota Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Date: August 12th, 2021

Re: Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy frontline workers

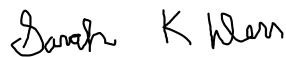
The Minnesota Pharmacy Alliance (MPA), the Minnesota Pharmacists Association (MPhA), and Minnesota Society of Health-System Pharmacists (MSHP) represents pharmacists and pharmacies in Minnesota. MPA, MPhA, and MSHP represent all types of pharmacists from those working in health-systems, to regional and national chains, to pharmacists embedded in clinics and independently owned pharmacies. Our community pharmacy staff have cared for Minnesotans since the pandemic began, and our health-system pharmacy staff have cared (and are caring) for the sickest of the patients side by side with our doctors and nurses in the ICU and medical surgical units. Pharmacists and pharmacy staff have been on the front line of vaccination efforts and testing sites. Pharmacists are one of the top trusted healthcare providers, and most patients live within 5 miles of their pharmacy and visit their pharmacy on average 18 times per year.

We are writing to you today to ensure that when you discuss and determine which Minnesota workers will be included and receive Frontline Worker Pay (FWP) for their tireless efforts during the pandemic and those who continue be on the front lines day in and day out, you will remember and include the Minnesota pharmacy workforce. Your local community and health-system pharmacist, their pharmacy technicians and their front line pharmacy employees deserve to be included in the list of Minnesotans who will qualify for and be prioritized to receive FWP.

We realize that the \$250 million set aside to fund the FWP program may seem like a lot, however, there are many Minnesotans who were and are on the front lines during the pandemic. We hope that you will consider additional funding be allocated for Minnesota's WFP program. Minnesota pharmacists are included in the state and federal definition of Essential Workers. Pharmacist technicians who donned PPE and respirators to enter COVID units to deliver medications for our patients must also be included. The vast majority did not have the opportunity to work remotely or take time off. Some pharmacy workforce members and pharm-techs were required to take furloughs, forgo pay raises, and some had benefits such as 401k contributions, tuition reimbursement and other benefits suspended. Many did not qualify for or receive stimulus pay while others had to take on additional shifts so that pharmacies around Minnesota could stay open. And many pharmacy workers, technicians and pharmacists had to implement curbside medication pick up and perform COVID-19 drive through testing, being exposed to COVID-19 patients on a daily basis shift after shift.

We also urge you to include pharmacy technicians and front line/front-of-house pharmacy workers in any distribution of WFP. There are approximately 21,535 Minnesotans who make up the three categories of pharmacists and pharmacy workers. The U.S. Treasury issued rules — [39 pages worth](#) — for how states should look at premium pay. Those rules bar anyone who worked remotely and says essential workers should be those with regular interaction with patients, the public or coworkers or the handling of items that were also handled by those groups of people. Minnesotans and pharmacists throughout the - pandemic faced increased hazards, lack of PPE, and hundreds of thousands at risk interactions in close contact situations. Many of them placed themselves and their families at risk every day as they worked bravely to help keep communities informed, tested, vaccinated and well.

For all these reasons and more, we ask you to include Minnesota pharmacy front line health and pharmacy workers in any FWP program. Thank you for your consideration and please let us know if we can provide any additional information or answer any of your questions.



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