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**LIPA STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO CVS HEALTH CORP. DECISION TO CUT
PHARMACIES' HOURS, PATIENT ACCESS, AND QUALITY OF CARE**

BATON ROUGE, LA (January 31, 2023) -- The Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association (LIPA) today issued the following statement in response to CVS Health Corporation's decision to cut pharmacy hours at a majority of their U.S. retail stores:

“CVS Health Corporation's decision is blamed on the pandemic and waning consumer demand, however, the anti-competitive practices of its pharmacy benefit manager (PBM), CVS Caremark, are more likely the culprit. CVS Caremark is the largest PBM in the nation; the top three PBMs act as a monopoly and control over eighty percent of the prescription drug market.”

“In the past, CVS Caremark has cut hours, closed on weekends, and abandoned patients, which it calls “customers,” after natural disasters. Suggesting pharmacists provide care to their patients remotely insults the years of dedication and training it takes to become their communities' most accessible health care provider. Suggesting patients drive to another location ignores the health and safety of patients living in rural areas or on fixed incomes.”

“Instead of cutting hours or closing pharmacies to benefit its shareholders, CVS Caremark should focus on the health, safety, and welfare of their pharmacists, staff, and patients. Focusing on these issues, professionalism, and quality health care delivery would allow CVS to employ multiple pharmacists and more staff to better serve patients. Steering patients toward mail order or other options that are more lucrative for CVS' bottom line does not help Louisiana patients.”

“We've seen a conscious effort by CVS Caremark to push local, independent community pharmacies out of its network through unreasonable contract terms, such as those required through the newly-signed State Office of Group Benefits (OGB) contract, which requires non-CVS or in-network pharmacies to accept reimbursements below their drug acquisition cost. **Negative reimbursement for dispensed prescriptions blatantly risks any pharmacy's viability to serve its community, and patients should be both aware and concerned of these terms, which put their own access to medication at risk.**”

LIPA urges patients and community members to speak up about concerns they may have with regard to their pharmacy access and quality of care. Patients and pharmacies can report their complaints issues and concerns to LIPA's [PBM Pharmacy Network Issues in Louisiana](#). For more information about Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association, see [LIPA.org](#).

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