



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **In Case You Missed It: State Leaders, Experts, and Seniors Participate in Pharmacy Benefit Manager Roundtable**

*Experts and Seniors Agree – Prescription Drug Reform Act is Vital for Florida*

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Today, Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Michelle Branham was joined by Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Jason Weida, Florida Insurance Commissioner Michael Yaworsky, Florida pharmacists, and local seniors to discuss the issues surrounding Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and the benefits of the proposed Prescription Drug Reform Act to Florida’s seniors. Senator Jason Brodeur and Representative Linda Chaney have proposed SB 1550/HB 1509 – legislation that would impose transparency requirements for Pharmacy Benefit Managers, give patients the freedom to choose which pharmacies work best for them, and increase access to affordable medications for consumers. A recording of the roundtable may be found [here](#).

“Nearly 9 in 10 seniors are currently taking prescription medications. The Governor has always put seniors first and that mission continues as we work to reduce prescription drug costs for seniors and give them more freedom to choose what pharmacy they use,” said **Elder Affairs Secretary Michelle Branham**. “The Governor laid out this legislative proposal in January, and thanks to Representative Chaney and Senator Brodeur, we have pending legislation that would enhance transparency, lower costs, and give our seniors more choices.”

“When you break down what pharmacy benefit managers are really doing – limiting patient choice and reducing access to often lifesaving medications – the time has come to put a stop to it,” said **Representative Linda Chaney**. “It’s an honor to shepherd House Bill 1509 through the legislative process under the guidance of Governor DeSantis and strong leadership of Speaker Paul Renner and we won’t back down from exposing and limiting these egregious practices.”

“Prescription drugs can drastically impact a person’s quality of life, and for some Floridians, they are the difference between life and death,” said **Senator Jason Brodeur**. “Patients deserve to know when drug price increases occur and where they can find their prescription drugs at an affordable price. By holding PBMs, which are acting on behalf of pharmacy benefits plans, to standards that protect the patients, this legislation will help Floridians receive their medication in a more accessible manor and at a more affordable cost.”

“Pharmacy Benefit Managers perform practices with innocuous names that do not benefit consumers and instead cost them more money, and this is unacceptable,” said **Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Jason Weida**. “Florida is creating an example for the rest of this country of how we can lower prescription drug costs and hold the pharmaceutical industry accountable. Through PBM reform legislation and other health care transparency initiatives, Floridians – especially vulnerable populations like seniors – won’t have to shoulder the burden of rising drug costs.”

“OIR is committed to consumer protection and this legislation strengthens OIR’s regulatory authority to ensure accountability for pharmacy benefit managers doing business in the state,” said **Florida Insurance Commissioner Michael Yaworsky**. “This is historic legislation and I want to thank Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature for their leadership on this important issue impacting Florida’s consumers.”

The roundtable discussion featured three pharmacists who all agreed that PBMs need to be better regulated to enhance patient care and keep costs lower.

“I’m very appreciative of what the Governor, Representative Chaney, and Senator Brodeur are doing with looking at this ‘shell game.’ I think transparency is the key part of the legislation so we can see where the money really is going.” – **Danny Jackson**, R.PH, C.PH, Stewart’s Pharmacy, Tallahassee, FL

“This legislation will help give pharmacists the ability to get back to being the advocate for the patient. Pharmacists, in coordination with physicians, are what provide the best health care for the patient. This bill helps put control back to providers instead of third parties.” – **Mark Mikhael**, Pharm. D., Chief Pharmacy Strategy Officer, CarepathRx, Orlando, FL

“This reform act is years in the making. It’s a monumental step forward to improve transparency and accountability to help the state appreciate the amount of revenue that PBMs extract from the health care system. This should help create more affordable access for state agencies and patients.” – **Daniel Buffington**, PharmD, MBA, FAPhA, Clinical Pharmacology Services, Tampa, FL

Among an audience of seniors at the Tallahassee Senior Center, local residents spoke on the importance of this bill to seniors.

“This legislation intends to help control consumer costs by making the prescription drug distribution enterprise more efficient, more transparent, and reducing the middleman’s role— it’s a worthy goal.” – **Marshall Kapp**, retired professor, Tallahassee, FL.

“I am hopeful this legislation will go through. At one time, I needed a medication that cost me \$500 a week, and it was hard to find. I hope this bill passes so other people don’t have to face this issue.” – **Jane Green**, retired nurse, Tallahassee, FL.

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**Department of Elder Affairs**

The Department of Elder Affairs works to ensure all Floridians can live well and age well.

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