

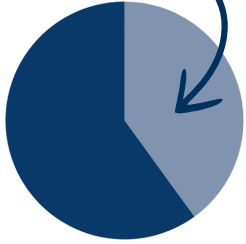
# ACCESS TO A LOCAL PHARMACY IS CRITICAL FOR PATIENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH



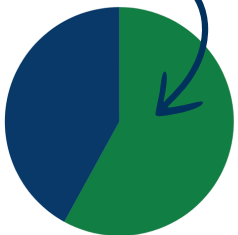
Pharmacies provide access to prescriptions, as well as additional essential healthcare services like blood pressure checks, vaccinations, and over-the-counter medications. **When pharmacies are local and accessible, patients are healthier:** health outcomes improve, emergency room visits are prevented. **When pharmacies are less accessible or unavailable,** studies show this contributes to medication non-adherence, especially among elderly adults.

## BUT PHARMACIES ARE RAPIDLY CLOSING IN MN, LEADING TO PHARMACY DESERTS & A CRISIS FOR ACCESS

44% (474) of pharmacies have closed in the past 10 years

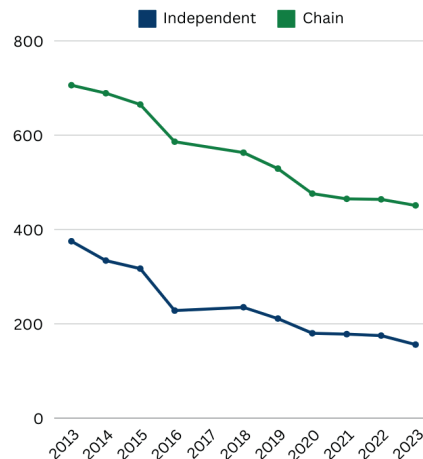


Of these, 58% (219) were independent (non-chain) pharmacies



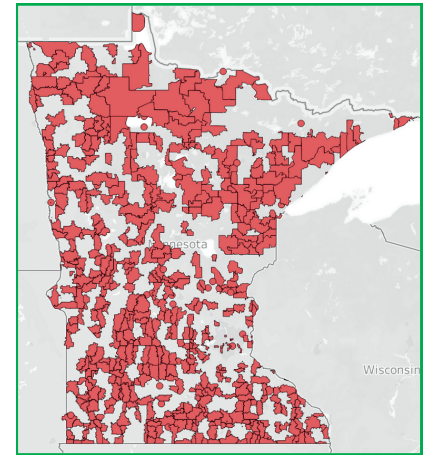
Data from MN Board of Pharmacy

Both independent & chain pharmacies are rapidly closing



Data from MN Board of Pharmacy

Zip codes without pharmacies (in red) are growing



Data from MN Board of Pharmacy. Map by Luke Slindee, PharmD.

## AFFECTING BOTH URBAN & RURAL AREAS

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) estimates that **more than one-third of residents in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the first-ring suburbs are living in pharmacy deserts.** The risk for pharmacy closures is higher in predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods, as well as in rural areas. In a 2024 study, **Minnesota ranked 10th in the nation for the largest proportion of residents living in a pharmacy desert.**

## THE PRIMARY THREAT TO LOCAL PHARMACIES

is the **chronic under-reimbursement from pharmacy benefit managers, as well as their exclusions of certain pharmacies from their preferred networks, affecting pharmacies' profitability which leads to disparate closure rates.**

**Pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) serve as middlemen between pharmacies who fill prescriptions and payers (such as insurance companies or government programs like Medicaid or Medicare) who cover the cost of patients' pharmacy care.**

Originally created to streamline the insurance claims process, they are now **vertically integrated** with insurance companies and influence **what drugs are available to and covered for patients, how much they cost, where patients can fill them, and how much the pharmacies who fill them are reimbursed.**