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**"BAD FOR BUSINESS & BAD FOR NEW YORK"
UPSTATE BUSINESS COMMUNITY UNITES IN OPPOSITION TO S.3995**

Analysis Shows Bill Would Cost Taxpayers Nearly \$400 Million in 2014 & Over \$6 Billion in Next 10 Years

Unshackle Upstate, The Business Council, PCMA & New York State Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans Say "Protectionist Legislation" Will Cost New Yorkers Choice, Safety & Billions of Dollars

(Albany, NY) -- Some of upstate New York's leading business advocacy groups today came out strongly against legislation that is currently being considered in the New York State Senate, calling it bad for business and bad for New York. The bill – which passed the Assembly earlier this week – would limit pharmacy mail order options for health insurance purchasers by waiving terms, conditions and network requirements for retail pharmacies. This change would effectively eliminate cost-savings and value that allows health insurance plans to create affordable drug coverage options for the insured, and represents a rolling back of Governor Andrew Cuomo's critical Medicaid reforms of 2011.

Unshackle Upstate, [the Business Council of New York](#) and the New York State Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans, among others, have united in their public opposition to a bill that will reduce competition, raise prices for consumers and taxpayers, and reduce the quality of care for patients.

In a [cost analysis](#) released just last month, experts determined that if enacted, S.3995 would cost taxpayers \$392 million in 2015 alone, and more than \$6 billion over the next ten years. With regards to patient safety, the study also concluded that S.3995 would "reduce the quality of care for patients taking specialty medications for conditions such as multiple sclerosis, hepatitis C, and rheumatoid arthritis. [S.3995] effectively exempts retail pharmacies from meeting the same safety and performance standards—contractual *terms and*

conditions—that health plans require of mail-service and specialty pharmacies."

"The rising cost of private health insurance remains a major concern for our members and their employees, to that end, we are always exploring opportunities to help keep health insurance affordable in New York State," said **Brian Sampson, executive director of Unshackle Upstate**. "We maintain that the greatest way to control health care costs is through a robust, easily navigable network of health care providers to care for the privately insured. Unshackle Upstate opposes S.3995-A/A.5723-A as it will eliminate many of the cost-saving measures insured New Yorkers currently benefit from related to their purchase of prescription drugs while limiting the ability of employers to provide affordable coverage."

"This legislation would reduce competition and raise prices for consumers and employers alike, without delivering any added benefit to the public," said **Heather Briccetti, CEO and President of The Business Council of New York**. "Mail order pharmacies have not put independent pharmacies at risk. Rather, the two have shared in the overall growth of pharmacy expenditures. But this bill will unquestionably result in increased pharmaceutical costs for New York's consumers and employers and a decrease in those employers offering a pharmaceutical benefit to their employees."

"This measure will drive up costs by limiting consumer choice and access to prescription drugs, while exposing the public to additional risks posed by dispensing and administration errors," said **Deborah Fasser on behalf of the New York State Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans**. "In addition, this bill seeks to exempt retail pharmacies from quality assurance and safety standards. Each day, new more complex medicines are becoming available and not all pharmacies are equipped to safely offer them to the public."

Under current law, millions of New Yorkers can choose to receive their prescriptions – typically for chronic conditions like high-blood pressure or high cholesterol that require regular medications – from mail-order pharmacies. These pharmacies provide busy New York families and individuals with limited mobility safe and affordable prescriptions that are conveniently delivered to their doorstep, with discounts of 10 to 15 percent compared to retail pharmacies.

Furthermore, these technologically advanced mail-service pharmacies achieve dispensing accuracy rates up to 23 times better than drugstores. Studies have found an error rate of nearly one in every 50 prescriptions (1.72%) filled at drugstores, compared to less than one in every 1,000 prescriptions (0.075%) at mail-service pharmacies. By being more accurate, mail-service pharmacies help ensure that patients get the correct drugs, dosages, and dosage forms, and thus avoid costly adverse drug events that can result in hospitalization.

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