Walmart

The Honorable Will Carpenter, Chairperson
House Committee on Health and Human Services
300 SW 10th Avenue, Room 112-N
Topeka, KS 66612
Submitted to: Health.Human.Services@house.ks.gov

Re: Jan. 29, 2026 hearing on HB 2157

Written testimony only in SUPPORT

Chairman Carpenter and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Walmart Inc. (Walmart), we submit this letter in support of HB 2157, which would expand pharmacists' scope of practice to include point-of-care testing and treatment for COVID-19. Under current law, pharmacists may test and treat influenza, streptococcal pharyngitis, and urinary tract infections. HB 2157 would extend this authority by allowing pharmacists to also screen for and initiate therapy for COVID-19 pursuant to a statewide protocol.

Nearly 90% of Americans live within 5 miles of a community pharmacy. [1] There are 15% more pharmacy locations compared to physician practices in low-income communities,[2] and many are open during extended hours—including nights and weekends – when other healthcare providers are unavailable. For instance, Walmart offers Testing and Treatment services in 21 states, including Kansas, with 75% of customers using this service after 5 p.m. on weekdays or on the weekend. In Kansas, Walmart operates 82 pharmacies and about half of our pharmacists in Kansas have been with Walmart over a decade. Empowering pharmacists to test and treat the respiratory disease of COVID-19 will significantly enhance healthcare accessibility in the state.

Pharmacists are integral members of the community that provide significant value to the individuals they serve. They are trusted, highly trained health care professionals that may be a first stop on a patient's health care journey, most frequently due to availability, affordability, and/or geography. Allowing pharmacists to practice in accordance with their training and education can help to alleviate the burden on overextended primary care providers and provide patients with access to timely, high-quality care close to home.

Early identification and treatment can prevent complications and reduce the need for more costly interventions. Timely access to testing and treatment is essential for not only quick recovery but also will help to prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and reduce the spread of common viral and bacterial infections. This legislation will further empower pharmacists to play a vital role in our healthcare system, improving access to care, reducing strain on healthcare facilities, and enhancing patient outcomes. We strongly encourage you to support HB 2157. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Irsik
Director, Public Affairs and State and Local Government Relations
Walmart

[1] Berenbrok L, Tang S, et al. Access to community pharmacies: A nationwide geographic information systems cross-sectional analysis. JAPhA. July 2022. https://www.japha.org/article/S1544-3191(22)00233-3/fulltext