



# TOGETHER, UNDAUNTED

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

## WASHINGTON PHARMACISTS GAIN MEDICAL PROVIDER STATUS

Washington was the first state in the country to require that commercial health insurance plans include pharmacists in their provider networks. The phased implementation begins in 2016 within health systems and in 2017 with service reimbursements for services provided by licensed pharmacists who meet the credentialing requirements.

### WHY ADD PHARMACISTS TO THE HEALTHCARE TEAM?

- Pharmacists have highly specialized knowledge of medications and years of college and post-collegiate training.
- Studies have shown that when a pharmacist is included in a healthcare team, the patient's outcome improves.
- Washington state has had an influx of newly insured individuals with the Affordable Care Act.
- Clinics and medical groups have wanted to add pharmacists to their staff, but could not afford to do so in the absence of this legislation.

### WHAT DOES SB 5557 MEAN FOR PATIENTS?

- Patients will see increased access to medical care from pharmacists practicing within their scope of practice, just like nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

“Pharmacists can now be fully integrated members of your healthcare team. As a patient, you will benefit from their experience and specialized knowledge.”

—Don Downing  
I2P2 Endowed Clinical Professor

- Rural and underserved communities that struggle with primary care providers who are in short supply and overburdened will be better served.
- People living with chronic illnesses will have access to medication experts. Five percent of patients consume 50% of healthcare expenses, much of which comes from the costs of managing chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension and congestive heart failure.
- Pharmacists won't diagnose and won't replace the doctor's role in acute care.
- The law does not apply to Medicare, Medicaid or TriCare plans and applies strictly to pharmacists in a clinical setting, not to the work of dispensing medication, including educating patients about their new medications or answering any questions.

### WHAT ROLE DID THE UW SCHOOL OF PHARMACY PLAY?

- UW School of Pharmacy has long been an advocate for the expansion of the role of pharmacists in health care.
- UW School of Pharmacy has led the nation in advocating for pharmacy practice innovations, including pharmacist-provided vaccinations—now available in all 50 states—emergency contraception and more, all of which began in Washington state.
- Don Downing, Institute of Innovative Pharmacy Practice (I2P2) Endowed Clinical Professor in the University of Washington School of Pharmacy, along with UW School of Pharmacy faculty and students, have advocated for this change for over 15 years.

