

NLGA – For Consideration:

**NLGA Consensus Resolution on Charitable Drug Donation Programs**

**WHEREAS**, in a Gallup survey of nearly 20,000 U.S. adults, roughly one-third of respondents – the equivalent of more than 82 million Americans – said they have made at least one trade-off with daily living expenses to afford healthcare,<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, health care affordability remains one of the leading concerns facing Americans, with national polling showing health care as Americans’ top domestic concern in 2026<sup>2</sup> and that 59% of adults worry about affording prescription drug costs for themselves or their families,<sup>3</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, prescription drug costs cause many patients to delay, ration, or forego treatment, with 43% of United States adults reporting that they have not taken medication as prescribed in the past year because of cost, including not filling prescriptions, substituting over-the-counter medicines, cutting pills, or skipping doses,<sup>4</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, medical debt can impact individuals’ credit ratings, and is one of the leading causes of personal bankruptcy in the U.S., with approximately 66.5% of personal bankruptcies tied to medical issues,<sup>5</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, people with medical debt are five times more likely to forego mental health care than people without medical debt,<sup>6</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, between 2018 and 2023, the number of retail pharmacies located in rural communities declined by 5.9%, compared with a 3.4% decline in urban communities, and the need for medication access is especially acute in rural areas, where transportation barriers, pharmacy closures, workforce shortages, insurance challenges, and “pharmacy desert” conditions can make it harder for patients to fill prescriptions and maintain treatment for chronic conditions,<sup>7</sup> affecting the availability and affordability of prescription drugs and impacting health care costs, and

**WHEREAS**, charitable medication programs, including drug donation repositories, can have a positive impact on the availability and affordability of prescription medications, and can reduce health system costs, and

**WHEREAS**, patient safety and medication integrity can be protected through uniform standards requiring pharmacist-led inspection, original sealed or tamper-evident packaging, visible expiration dates, secure recordkeeping, and

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<sup>1</sup> Gallup News, “One-Third of Americans Cut Back to Cover Healthcare Expenses,” March 12, 2026, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/702596/one-third-americans-cut-back-cover-healthcare-expenses.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Gallup News, “Healthcare Reclaims Top Spot Among U.S. Domestic Worries,” March 31, 2026, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/707732/healthcare-reclaims-top-spot-among-domestic-worries.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> KFF, “Public Views on Prescription Drug Costs: Regulation, Affordability and TrumpRx,” March 13, 2026, <https://www.kff.org/public-opinion/public-views-on-prescription-drug-costs-regulation-affordability-and-trumpRx/>

<sup>4</sup> KFF, “Americans’ Challenges with Health Care Costs,” April 30, 2026, <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/americans-challenges-with-health-care-costs/>

<sup>5</sup> American Journal of Public Health, “Medical Bankruptcy: Still Common Despite the Affordable Care Act,” February 6, 2019, <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/ajph.2018.304901?journalCode=ajph>

<sup>6</sup> Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, “People With Medical Debt Five Times More Likely to Not Receive Mental Health Care Treatment,” April 18, 2025, <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2025/people-with-medical-debt-five-times-more-likely-to-not-receive-mental-health-care-treatment>

<sup>7</sup> RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis, “Changes in Rural Pharmacy Presence 2023,” 08/2024, <https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/publications/1677>

30 **WHEREAS**, a review of one charitable medication program showed a 27% reduction in hospital  
31 costs to a multistate health system, and a 20% reduction in inpatient hospital stays,<sup>8</sup> and

32 **WHEREAS**, SafeNetRx manages a drug donation repository and charitable pharmacy, and reports  
33 that, for every \$1 invested, there has been \$20 worth of medicine made available to patients who  
34 would otherwise go without, and patients save more than \$200 per prescription, and

35 **WHEREAS**, the results of a network of cancer drug repositories showed improved access to  
36 cancer medications and a reduction in unnecessary medication waste,<sup>9</sup> and

37 **WHEREAS**, more than \$5 billion worth of safe, unused medicine goes to waste each year,<sup>10</sup> and  
38 SafeNetRx estimates that, as a result of their programs, more than 800 tons of medication has  
39 been redirected for distribution to patients in need or for environmentally safe disposal since  
40 2007, and

41 **WHEREAS**, environmental stewardship and responsible medication management are essential to  
42 protecting public health, reducing preventable waste, and safeguarding waterways, with the U.S.  
43 Environmental Protection Agency saying that research shows that pharmaceuticals entering the  
44 environment through flushing or other means negatively affect aquatic ecosystems, including and  
45 fish and animal populations,<sup>11</sup> and

46 **WHEREAS**, charitable donation programs can redirect safe, unused medications to patients in  
47 need rather than allowing them to be discarded or improperly disposed of, and

48 **WHEREAS**, state and territorial government leaders can advance efforts to address health care  
49 availability and affordability through charitable drug donation programs and drug repository  
50 programs to reduce the costs of prescription drugs, reduce the amount of medication waste, and  
51 reduce the impact of improper drug disposal to the environment.

52 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the National Lieutenant Governors Association  
53 (NLGA) recognizes drug donation repositories and charitable drug donation programs as an  
54 effective tool for reducing drug waste and addressing prescription drug costs.

55 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NLGA encourages state and territorial government leaders to  
56 explore drug donation programs and other efforts to safely collect, inspect, and distribute donated  
57 medications for the benefit of patients, health systems, and the environment.

58 ADOPTED, this day, the \_\_\_ of July, 2026.

59 Co-Sponsors: *Pending*

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61 *Proposed for the docket by:* Iowa Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer

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<sup>8</sup> RTI International and Dispensary of Hope Research Report, August 9, 2022,

<https://resources.dispensaryofhope.org/informationLibrary/posts/rti-international-and-dispensary-of-hope-research-report>

<sup>9</sup> American Society of Clinical Oncology, "Network of Cancer Drug Repositories Improves Access to Cancer Medications, Reduces Unnecessary Medication Waste," October 6, 2025, <https://www.asco.org/about-asco/press-center/news-releases/network-cancer-drug-repositories-improves-access-cance-medications-reduces-unnecessary-waste>

<sup>10</sup> National Conference of State Legislators, "State Prescription Drug Repository Programs," March 12, 2026, <https://www.ncsl.org/health/state-prescription-drug-repository-programs>

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "The Impact of Pharmaceuticals Released to the Environment," November 10, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/household-medication-disposal/impact-pharmaceuticals-released-environment>