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Independent Report Finds Significant Benefits of North Dakota's Pharmacy Ownership Law

As North Dakotans prepare to vote on Measure 7, the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), a nonprofit research organization, finds that, as a result of the state's Pharmacy Ownership Law, North Dakota outperforms other states across every key measure of pharmacy care. In an independent, data-driven report released today, ILSR crunches the numbers to show that North Dakota's prescription drug prices are among the lowest in the country, North Dakotans enjoy an unparalleled level of access to pharmacies, and North Dakota's economy benefits from tens of millions of dollars in economic activity and tax revenue generated by independent pharmacies.

The full report, titled "North Dakota's Pharmacy Ownership Law: Ensuring Access, Competitive Prices, and Quality Care," is available at <http://www.ilsr.org/report-pharmacy-ownership-law>

Among the report's key findings:

- North Dakota's prescription drug prices are among the lowest in the country. Over the last five years, North Dakota has ranked 13th in lowest prescription prices among the 50 states, according to leading prescription price data. Compared to South Dakota, the average prescription price in North Dakota is **not only lower, but has increased much more slowly** over the last five years.
- North Dakotans receive a high level of care from their locally owned pharmacies, and in national studies, independent pharmacies consistently outperform pharmacies operated by chains and big-box stores.
- North Dakotans enjoy an unparalleled level of pharmacy access, with more pharmacies per capita than any neighboring state and the national average. Pharmacies in North Dakota are not only more plentiful, they're also more broadly distributed. **North Dakota's rural census tracts have 51 percent more pharmacies than South Dakota's do.**
- If the Pharmacy Ownership Law is overturned, the report finds that about **70 of North Dakota's local pharmacies would close**, including 25 pharmacies that currently serve sparsely populated areas. The state's older residents would be particularly hard hit.
- A shift from locally owned pharmacies to chains and mail order firms would lead to **direct economic losses in the state**, as measured in declines in wages and business income, of at least \$17 million a year and as high as \$29 million, with corresponding declines in indirect economic activity and tax revenue.

"North Dakota's superior pharmacy care is no accident, but rather the result of a smart, forward-thinking policy choice," said the report's co-author, Stacy Mitchell. "If Measure 7 passes and the Pharmacy Ownership Law is overturned, our research indicates that North Dakotans are likely to see significant changes in the quality and availability of pharmacy services."

The report also assesses the campaign to repeal the pharmacy ownership law, and finds not only that the claims made by proponents of repeal are unfounded, but **that they are funded exclusively by Walmart, which has contributed \$2.7 million to the campaign as of early October** — more per resident than either Barack Obama or Mitt Romney each spent during the entire 2012 presidential race.

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The Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) is a 40-year-old nonprofit research and educational organization based in Minneapolis, MN, Portland, ME, and Washington, DC. ILSR's mission is to provide innovative strategies, working models, and timely research to support strong communities and local economies.