

significantly longer due to network limitations. This is particularly difficult for our state's homeless population, who frequently move around and may lack the skills necessary to find a new doctor, but who have medication that they need to take to survive... Many homeless individuals lack the resources or ability to navigate California's complex healthcare system, and nearly a quarter said they were unable to obtain medication... The challenges everyday Californians face in finding a physician become even more severe for those experiencing homelessness, where a lack of resources can turn barriers into impossibilities. No one should be denied access to life-saving medication simply because they cannot navigate our complex system... California has a doctor shortage; we need to ensure that, amid this shortage, people are not falling through the cracks and losing their care. AB 1587 builds on the core philosophy of current law and ensures that Californians will continue to have access to medication that their lives depend on."

- 2. Background.** The Board is estimated to regulate over 50,700 pharmacists, 1,300 advanced practice pharmacists, 4,400 intern pharmacists, and 65,700 pharmacy technicians across a total of 32 licensing programs. In addition to regulating personal professionals, the Board oversees, and licenses related business entities, including pharmacies, clinics, wholesalers, third-party logistic providers, and automated drug delivery systems.

The Pharmacy Law generally prohibits a pharmacist from refilling a prescription except upon authorization of the prescriber. This authorization may be given orally or at the time of the original prescription. If no refills were authorized when the prescription was written, the patient, or the pharmacist on behalf of the patient, may request a refill. However, the Pharmacy Law also allows a drug or device to be refilled by a pharmacist if the prescriber is unavailable to authorize the refill and if, in the pharmacist's professional judgment, failure to refill the prescription could result in harm to the patient. Last year, AB 1503 (Berman, Chapter 196, Statutes of 2025) amended the same section of Pharmacy Law as this bill, among other changes made by that measure, to eliminate a requirement that the pharmacist make every reasonable effort to contact the prescriber prior to refilling a prescription without a prescriber's authorization. The bill also deleted the requirement that the pharmacist make an appropriate record, including the basis for proceeding with an emergency refill. Under current law, a pharmacist is still required to subsequently inform the prescriber within a reasonable period of time of any refills dispensed. This bill only applies that requirement if a prescriber is identified.

- 3. Arguments in Support.** Biocom writes that AB 1587 makes a targeted, common-sense improvement to emergency prescription refill statute.

According to California Access Coalition, "Ensuring access to life-saving medication is a matter of basic human dignity and responsible governance. No individual should face preventable harm due to gaps in administrative processes or provider availability. AB 1587 represents a measured and necessary step to uphold the well-being of Californians, particularly those most at risk."

The California Pharmacists Association notes that "Even short delays in therapy for conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or epilepsy can result in

significant harm, including hospitalization or worse. This bill ensures that pharmacists can use their clinical training to prevent these dangerous gaps in care.”

According to the California Senior Legislature, “AB 1587 promotes continuity of care, prevents avoidable health crises, and supports aging Californians in safely managing their health conditions.”

The Western Center on Law and Poverty writes that “People may lose their physician for various reasons, including when providers leave their medical group or changes in circumstance that results in health plan changes. This can lead to gaps of care for patients who cannot find a new provider before they run out of their medication. Finding and securing an appointment for a new provider can be a lengthy process, especially for Medi-Cal patients or patients located in rural areas... This bill strikes the right balance between patient access and safety by ensuring patients can continue to access medications they have already been prescribed while finding a new provider.”

SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION:Support:

Biocom California
California Access Coalition
California Pharmacists Association
California Senior Legislature
Western Center on Law & Poverty

Opposition:

None received

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