

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS MINIARD CULPEPPER, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, JULIA M. MEJIA, BREADON, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A PHARMACY STABILIZATION AND ACCESS FUND

WHEREAS, Access to pharmacy services is a critical component of public health infrastructure, ensuring that residents are able to obtain prescription medications, vaccinations, and other essential health services; *and*

WHEREAS, Recent pharmacy closures in several Boston neighborhoods have raised concerns about the emergence of “pharmacy deserts,” where residents must travel long distances to access pharmacy services; *and*

WHEREAS, Limited access to pharmacies disproportionately impacts seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, and households without reliable access to transportation; *and*

WHEREAS, Rising commercial rents, industry consolidation, and changes in pharmaceutical reimbursement structures have contributed to the closure of neighborhood pharmacies and reduced access to pharmacy services in underserved communities; *and*

WHEREAS, The establishment of a dedicated fund to support the retention, stabilization, and expansion of pharmacies in underserved neighborhoods will help ensure equitable access to essential health services throughout the City of Boston; **NOW, THEREFORE**

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter XII: Public Health and Welfare, is hereby amended by inserting a new section establishing a Pharmacy Stabilization and Access Fund to be administered by the Boston Public Health Commission.

12.21 Pharmacy Stabilization and Access Fund

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of the fund shall be to support the retention, stabilization, and establishment of pharmacies in neighborhoods identified as having limited access to pharmacy services.

Section 2. Uses.

The fund may be used to provide financial assistance including but not limited to stabilization grants for existing pharmacies, startup support for new pharmacies in underserved neighborhoods, capital improvements or equipment necessary for pharmacy operations, and partnerships with community health centers or other healthcare providers to expand access to pharmacy services.

Financial assistance provided pursuant to this section shall be limited to independently owned pharmacies, nonprofit pharmacies, and pharmacies operated in partnership with hospitals, community health centers or other community-based healthcare providers, and shall not be made available to any for-profit pharmacy that is publicly traded or owned, in whole or in part, by a parent entity that operates pharmacy locations in more than one state.

Section 3. Funding Sources.

The Pharmacy Stabilization and Access Fund shall be supported through contributions including but not limited to:

- (a) Community benefit contributions from hospitals, healthcare systems, and medical campuses located within the City of Boston;
- (b) Voluntary contributions from pharmacy operators opening new locations within the City; and;
- (c) Grants, philanthropic contributions, and other public funding sources.

Section 4. Governance.

The Boston Public Health Commission shall establish guidelines governing the administration of the fund, identify areas of limited pharmacy access within the City of Boston, determine eligibility criteria for financial assistance, and submit periodic reports to the Boston City Council regarding fund revenues, expenditures, and pharmacy access initiatives supported by the fund.

Section 5. Severability.

The provisions of this ordinance are severable and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which remain in full force and effect.

Section 6. Effective Date.

The provisions of this ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage.

Filed on: April 1, 2026