



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Government Operations
Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

December 10, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Government Operations was referred the following docket for consideration:

Docket #1453, Order to submit a petition to the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy.

This matter was sponsored by Council President Ruthzee Louijeune and was referred to the Committee on August 4, 2025.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #1453, is a petition to the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy proposing amendments to the Code of Massachusetts Regulations. Under Massachusetts General Law chapter 30A, section 4, any interested person may petition a state agency requesting the adoption, amendment or repeal of any regulation, and may accompany the petition with such pertinent data, views and arguments. Accordingly, in response to increasing instances of pharmacy closures across the City, Docket #1453, requests that the Board strengthen the Commonwealth's regulatory framework governing pharmacy closures.

Specifically, the petition proposes amendments to 247 CMR § 6.13, which regulates pharmacy closures. The proposed amendments would require pharmacies to provide no less than 120 days' advance notice prior to permanent closure, as opposed to the Board's current 14 day requirement.

Information Received at Hearing

The Committee held a working session on December 8, 2025. The Committee heard testimony from Segun Idowu, Chief, Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion; Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner, Boston Public Health Commission; and PJ McCann, Deputy Commissioner for Policy & Planning, Boston Public Health Commission, testifying on behalf of the Administration.

During the working session, the Committee reviewed the language of the proposed petition and examined both the public-health implications of pharmacy closures and the regulatory adjustments necessary to strengthen safeguards for Boston residents. The Committee discussed recent data from the Boston Public Health Commission showing a significant net loss of pharmacies throughout the City since 2018. It was noted that since 2018, the City has experienced 41 pharmacy closures. Administration representatives testified that such closures have disrupted access to essential medication, chronic-disease management, and vaccination



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services, underscoring that pharmacies function as critical, frontline health-care infrastructure for many residents. It was the consensus of the Committee that extending the notice requirement from 14 days to 120 days was necessary to reduce abrupt service gaps and to ensure continuity of care, particularly in communities with higher health-equity burdens.

In reviewing the petition's language, the Committee focused on making revisions that would improve clarity, enforceability, and consistency. Discussion first centered on incorporating a new municipality-notification requirement, which would obligate pharmacies to notify not only the State Board of Registration in Pharmacy, but also the relevant municipal authority—such as the City Clerk, Mayor's Office, or equivalent city/town official. Councilors agreed that municipal notification would better equip city departments and elected offices to alert residents, coordinate transition planning, and mitigate the sudden loss of access to prescription services. Additional discussion addressed the scope of information that should accompany a pharmacy's notice, including contact information for the pharmacist in charge, the manager of record, and the property owner or landlord, as testimony indicated that landlords are often aware of closure decisions months in advance and can play a meaningful role in ensuring timely communication. The Administration also recommended including information on remaining lease terms to support economic-development and neighborhood-stability efforts following a closure.

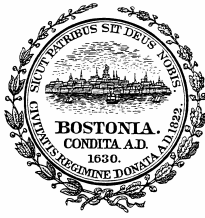
With respect to patient-notice requirements, Councilors discussed the practical challenges patients often face upon pharmacy closures like finding new modes of transportation and navigating insurance obstacles, emphasizing the importance of robust regulations that give patients enough time to plan. It was noted current regulations require pharmacies to display a conspicuous public posting at the pharmacy itself; however, that pharmacies need only "attempt" to personally notify patients of an upcoming closure. The Committee agreed that language should be revised to state that pharmacies "must notify" patients and further, that the proposed 120-day period should be understood as a minimum notice standard.

The Committee concluded its review with the intent to advance the petition in a new draft that reflects the suggestions and recommendations discussed during the working session.

Summary of Amendments

The original petition was amended to reflect that the petition is submitted on behalf of the City of Boston rather than the Boston City Council. In all places written, "Boston City Council" was struck and replaced with "City of Boston."

Under the proposed amendments to 247 CMR § 6.13(4) the original petition was amended to clarify that the notification requirement applies to all patients who had a prescription filled at the pharmacy within the preceding 120 days, at minimum, of the intended closure date. The language was further amended to specify that notification is required, by striking the words "shall attempt" from the 4th line of the paragraph and replacing them with "must notify."



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The original petition was revised to add a new section at the end thereof (now, subsection 8) requiring pharmacies to notify the municipality in which they are located of their impending closure and to include contact information of the property owner and relevant lease details.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that this matter **OUGHT TO PASS IN A NEW DRAFT.**

Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Chair
Committee on Government Operations