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Iowa's \$22 Million Contract Pharmacy Scandal Highlights Urgent Need for 340B Reform

(April 24, 2026) – Today, Jen Laws, President & CEO of Community Access National Network (CANN), released the following statement in response to Iowa's lack of oversight over its 340B program, forcing patients to bear the burden of their failures:

“The recent findings out of Iowa underscore a systemic and deeply troubling reality: without meaningful oversight, the 340B program remains vulnerable to misuse, and we as patients ultimately pay the price.

“According to a March 6 complaint filed on behalf of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, NuCara Specialty Pharmacy — contracted since 1998 to purchase medications at the 340B discounted price for Iowa's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) — failed to return more than \$22 million in required 340B savings to the state. The state alleges that the pharmacy withheld eight months of payments and used those savings to satisfy unrelated creditors, leaving insufficient capital to repay the program.

“The consequences are immediate and devastating. Iowa’s ADAP now faces a significant budget shortfall and has been forced to implement a waitlist exceeding 1,100 people — the first such waitlist in decades. This failure of oversight jeopardizes the health and stability of thousands of Iowans living with HIV.

“The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program exists to ensure that people living with HIV can access lifesaving medications and care. ADAPs rely on the integrity of the 340B program to stretch limited federal dollars as far as possible. When contract pharmacies do not meet their obligations, and when states lack the mechanisms to detect or prevent such failures, the entire system falters.

"It's within this vein that Iowa State Representative Brett Barker's involvement is also deeply troubling. While serving as NuCara's Vice President of Operations, he introduced legislation to expand 340B in order to better serve contract pharmacies' financial interests.

“This is a stark example of why transparency and accountability must be central to any conversation about the future of 340B. Expansion mandates without corresponding oversight will continue to expose patients, HIV programs, and public health systems to unacceptable levels of risk. The absence of regulatory guardrails has already created an environment where misuse can go undetected until the harm is irreversible.

"CANN has long advocated for reforms that protect the integrity of the 340B program while ensuring that savings are used as intended — to support patient care. Iowa’s experience is a warning to every state and every covered entity: without strong oversight, the people who rely on these programs will bear the burden of failures they did not create. The health and well-being of people living with HIV depend on a 340B system that is transparent, accountable, and safeguarded against abuse."