



## Providers March to Capitol Hill for Second Straight Year to ‘Defend 340B’

July 13, 2023 [William Newton](#)

On a sunny, humid, 92-degree afternoon in Washington, D.C., over 50 safety-net health care providers marched to the U.S. Capitol grounds yesterday to raise awareness of threats to the 340B drug pricing program.

The demonstrators, which included representatives from critical access hospitals, health centers, and Ryan White clinics, among others, carried signs and chanted slogans such as “public health, not pharma wealth.” Community Voices for 340B (CV340B), a self-described grassroots/grasstops nonprofit group based in Washington, D.C., organized the demonstration for the second straight year.

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Marchers wearing “Defend 340B” t-shirts left for the Capitol in buses from the 340B Coalition summer conference in National Harbor, Md., just outside of Washington, D.C. Meanwhile, members of hospital group 340B Health wearing business attire left to lobby members of Congress. Though most demonstrators had attended the 340B Coalition conference, which ended shortly before the march began, the CV340B demonstration was not affiliated with 340B Health or the 340B Coalition.

AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s boisterous pro-340B demonstrations are iconic. For others in the 340B provider community, protest marches are a departure from typical advocacy work. During the march, Rhiannon Marshall Klein, national advocacy manager of CV340B, told demonstrators they could support those lobbying for the 340B program in Congress by showing politicians the program’s wide base of support.

Klein told 340B Report that CV340B prides itself on its diverse base of support from all types of 340B covered entities. “CV340B is the only place in the nation right now where hospitals, health centers, Ryan White clinics, STD clinics are all in one place talking,” she said. “That’s very powerful.”

Klein said that yesterday’s march largely had the same goal of the group’s first march in [August 2022](#), adding that there could be more impact this year because Congress was not in session during last year’s demonstration.

Three members of the Virginia Community Healthcare Association, which represents 30 health centers with over 182 locations in the state, were among the marchers yesterday. “We are here to help save this program because if we do not have 340B, our health centers cannot sustain or survive,” said Tracy Douglas, CEO of VCHA. “We need our legislators to hear from us.”

Also in attendance was David Lee, a pharmacist at Electra Memorial Hospital in Texas who was in Washington for the first time. Electra is a critical access

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hospital and 340B covered entity serving three large counties in rural Northern Texas.

“I’m doing the march because the manufacturer restrictions are really scary,” Lee said, referring to 24 brand drug companies’ 340B contract pharmacy policies. “I’m afraid if we lose the 340B program, we will not be able to take care of a lot of the patients that normally are unable to afford healthcare.”

Tom Siegmeth, who said he has worked with federally qualified health centers and Ryan White clinics for over two decades, echoed concerns about contract pharmacy restrictions. “Grant funding is very limited throughout the Ryan White world, so additional funding through the 340B program allows covered entities to provide retention specialists, patient navigators, and other critical services that fill in the gaps for underserved communities,” Siegmeth said. “Contract pharmacy restrictions have put Ryan White clinics and federally qualified health centers that rely on 340B funding in a very precarious position.”

Julia Garcia, program manager at Hope and Health Center of Central Florida, was another marcher. She said the 340B program helps her clinic, which specializes in sexually transmitted disease and HIV treatments, provide patients with medications and other assistance like housing, food, and transportation services.

“Funding from the 340B program is crucial to our organization, especially being a non-profit,” Garcia said. “I feel it’s my responsibility to promote and be an advocate for the 340B program, and that’s why I’m doing this march.”

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