



[REDACTED]

the choice between a community pharmacy and mail order should reside with the patient, those who opt for mail order deserve choice and competition, too. Combining their mail order facilities would concentrate 59 percent of the mail order market in one company, according to 2011 Atlantic Information Systems data. In 2009, the combined specialty drug market share for ESI and Medco stood at 52 percent. It is vital to patient care and cost containment that there be real competition in the burgeoning specialty drug market where patients are faced with serious life-threatening diseases and pay an average of \$1,900 for a prescription.

"Federal and state government agencies, in particular, should be troubled by this merger. For example, the Medicare Part D drug benefit is built on competition and approving this deal would undermine that foundation. At the state level, increasing this market concentration could increase the cost of state employee and other health plans.

"Undoubtedly, this announcement makes a stronger case for two legislative solutions that NCPA has endorsed. The Pharmacy Competition and Consumer Choice Act (H.R.1971/S.1058) would help protect the ability of patients to go to the pharmacist of their choice and level the pharmacy playing field. In addition, the Preserving Our Hometown Independent Pharmacies Act (H.R. 1046) would grant community pharmacies the same

