

**Key Takeaways**

- As of May 2025, Pennsylvania has 2,964 licensed pharmacies. Of these, 25 percent (750) are in rural counties and 75 percent (2,214) are in urban counties.
- Six percent of Pennsylvanians live more than five miles from the nearest pharmacy. This includes 18 percent of rural residents and 2 percent of urban residents.
- On May 5, 2025, [Rite Aid](#) filed for its second Chapter 11 bankruptcy, initiating the sale or closure of its stores and assets. In Pennsylvania, there are 349 licensed Rite Aid pharmacies, with 71 percent of stores located in urban counties and 29 percent located in rural counties.
- If all Rite Aid locations were to physically close and no other pharmacy were to assume control of these locations, the Commonwealth would experience a 12-percent decline in its total number of pharmacy locations. Counties such as Cambria, Cameron, Carbon, and Perry counties would experience the most drastic change in the number of pharmacy locations.
- There are 18,964 licensed pharmacists in Pennsylvania, with 23 percent residing in rural counties and 77 percent residing in urban counties.

**Current Landscape of Pharmacies and Pharmacists in Pennsylvania**

As of May 2025, there are 2,964 licensed pharmacies in Pennsylvania, representing both health system-affiliated and retail locations. Twenty-five percent (750) of pharmacies are physically located in rural counties, and 75 percent (2,214) are in urban counties. Figure 1 displays the number of licensed pharmacies by county.

While the overall number of pharmacies differs by geography, the per capita availability of pharmacies is relatively consistent. As shown in Figure 2, rural counties have 1.9 pharmacies per 10,000 residents, compared to 2.0 pharmacies per 10,000 residents in urban counties.

In 2024, the Department of State<sup>1</sup> reported there were 18,964 licensed pharmacists, with 23 percent located in rural counties and 77 percent located in urban counties. As seen in Figure 2, this equates to 12.9 pharmacists per 10,000 residents in rural counties and 15.2 pharmacists per 10,000 residents in urban counties. Notably, the distribution of pharmacists by location closely aligns with Pennsylvania's rural and urban population breakdown from the 2020 Census, as approximately 26 percent of Pennsylvania's residents live in rural counties and 74 percent live in urban counties.

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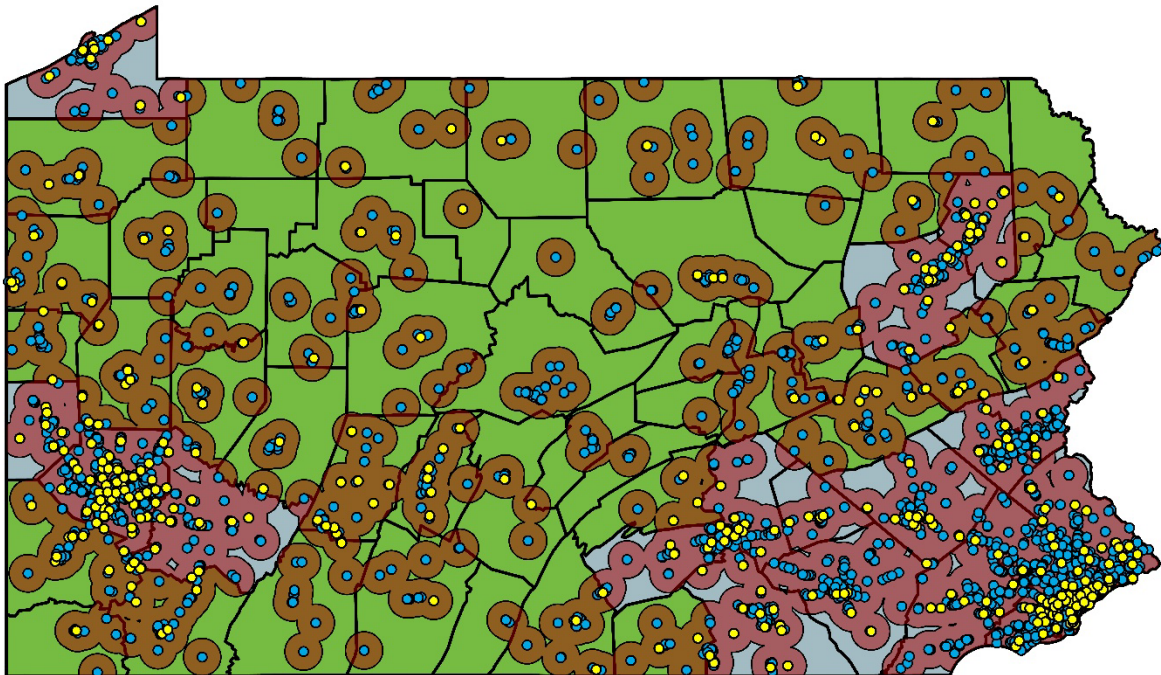
<sup>1</sup> Both the pharmacist and pharmacy data are maintained by the Pennsylvania State Board of Pharmacy. The 2024 pharmacist licensure data were obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State via the PA Open Data Portal and reflect a separate data capture from the pharmacy location data. Pharmacist figures are current as of March 14, 2024.



### Proximity to Pharmacy Services

One way to measure access to services is by the distance that residents must travel to obtain them. Approximately 777,000 Pennsylvanians live more than five miles from the nearest pharmacy. Eighty percent of these individuals reside in rural counties, while 20 percent live in urban counties. Overall, about 18 percent of the total rural population lives more than five miles from a pharmacy, compared to less than 2 percent of the total urban population—highlighting a significant geographic disparity in access to pharmacy services, seen in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Areas Located within a 5-Mile Radius of All Pharmacies in Pennsylvania as of May 2025**



Statewide Population Outside of a 5-Mile Radius = 777,000 (Rural: 618,000 and Urban: 159,000)

Statewide Population Within a 5-Mile Radius = 12.2 Million (Rural: 2.77 Million and Urban: 9.46 Million)

- Area Located Within a 5-Mile Radius to a Pharmacy
- Rural
- Rite Aid Pharmacies
- Non-Rite Aid Pharmacies
- Urban

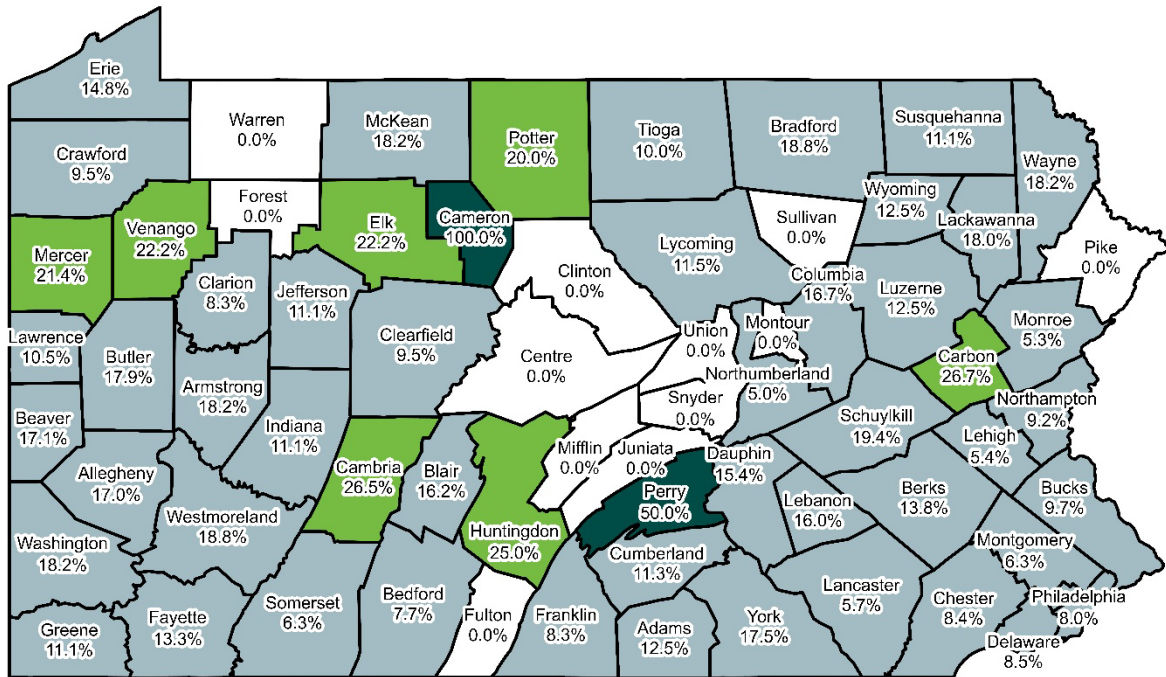
*Data Source: 2025 State Board of Pharmacy, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs, Pennsylvania Department of State.*

### A Shifting Landscape

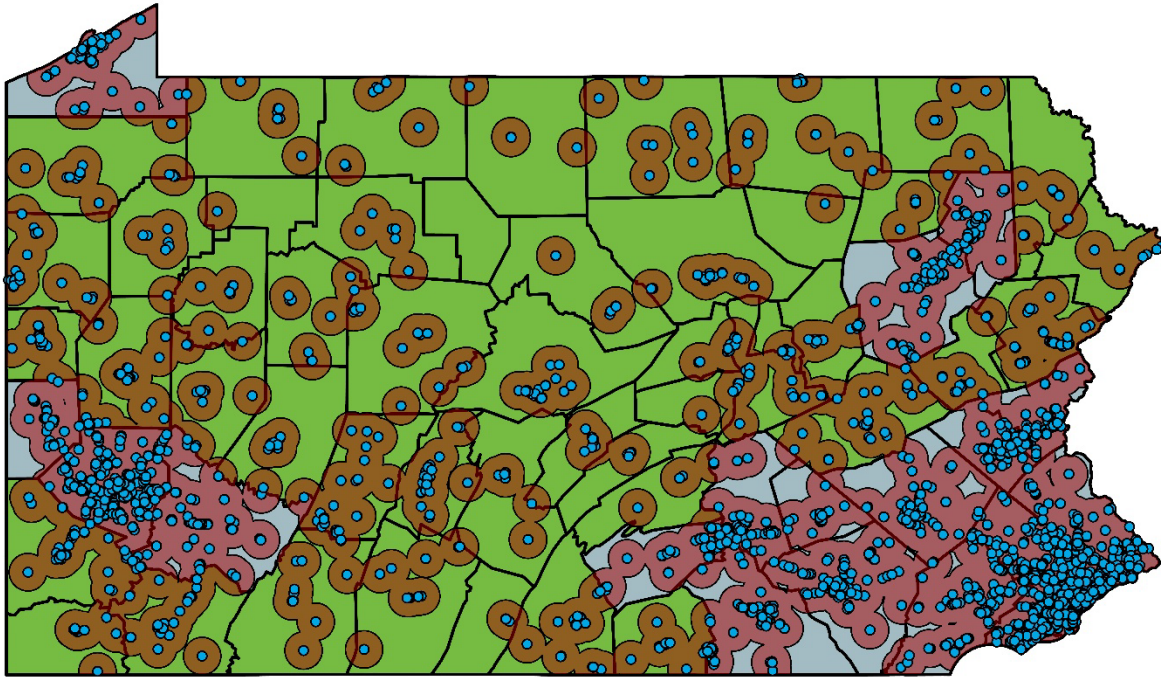
On May 5, 2025, Rite Aid filed for its second Chapter 11 bankruptcy, announcing plans to close or sell all remaining stores and assets. In Pennsylvania, there are 349 licensed Rite Aid pharmacies, with 71 percent (249) located in urban counties and 29 percent (100) in rural counties. These locations make up 11.7 percent of all pharmacies statewide, meaning their closure, if not offset by another provider, would significantly reduce pharmacy access across the Commonwealth.

The impact would not be felt evenly across the Commonwealth. Nine counties (Cambria, Cameron, Carbon, Elk, Huntingdon, Mercer, Perry, Potter, and Venango) could experience a decline of 20 percent or more in their total number of pharmacies, with Perry and Cameron counties facing the most significant losses (Figure 4). Cameron County would be the most affected, as Rite Aid is the only pharmacy currently operating there. In contrast, 12 counties would experience no change in pharmacy availability.

**Figure 4: Estimated Percent Change in Total Pharmacies if All Rite Aid Locations Close without Replacement by Pennsylvania County as of May 2025**



**Figure 5: Estimated Areas Located within a 5-Mile Radius of All Non-Rite Aid Pharmacies in Pennsylvania as of May 2025**



Statewide Population Outside of a 5-Mile Radius = 842,000 (Rural: 661,000 and Urban: 181,000)

Statewide Population Within a 5-Mile Radius = 12.16 Million (Rural: 2.72 Million and Urban: 9.44 Million)

■ Area Located Within a 5-Mile Radius to a Non-Rite Aid Pharmacy      ■ Rural  
● Non-Rite Aid Pharmacies      ■ Urban

*Data Source: 2025 State Board of Pharmacy, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs, Pennsylvania Department of State.*

### **Conclusion**

The closure of pharmacies in Pennsylvania, particularly in rural areas, presents significant challenges to healthcare access. Fewer physical locations limit residents' ability to obtain prescription medications, over-the-counter treatments, and vaccinations. It also limits access to pharmacist-led services such as health counseling and preventive care clinics.

As prescriptions are transferred to remaining pharmacies, these locations may face added strain while managing existing workforce shortages and an increase in the number of prescriptions needed to be filled. Fewer pharmacy options can also restrict consumers' ability to compare prices, which may lead to increased costs and a shift toward online pharmacy retailers.

In rural Pennsylvania, where healthcare services are already limited, these closures may further widen health disparities and reduce access to essential care for many communities.

## Definitions

Rural and Urban: A county is considered rural when the number of people per square mile within the county or school district is fewer than the statewide population density of 291 persons per square mile. Counties that have 291 people or more per square mile are considered urban.

## Method

### Data Sources:

- A list of licensed pharmacies was obtained in May 2025 from the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs under the Pennsylvania Department of State. This list did not reflect any announced Rite Aid closures. Pharmacies were geocoded using Geoapify and analyzed using ArcGIS Pro.
- The number of licensed pharmacists was obtained from the Pennsylvania Professional Licensee Data via the Department of State through the PA Open Data Portal, last updated March 14, 2024.
- Population data is based on the 2020 Decennial Census.

Assumptions: This fact sheet presents a worst-case scenario in which all physical Rite Aid pharmacy locations permanently close and are not replaced. It does not account for potential acquisitions or replacements by other companies (e.g., CVS or Walgreens), changes in availability and access to online pharmacy retailers or delivery services, or changes in prescription service continuity.

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