

The Mobile Pharmacy: 35 Sales a Day

A three-year experiment puts pharmacies on wheels in villages that have none. But at 35 sales a day the math only closes with transport subsidies, tax breaks announced up front, and the right to carry pre-orders on the same trip.



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Starting 1 September, a three-year experiment with mobile pharmacy points begins in villages that have no pharmacy at all. A lot of the right words have already been said about it, all about access to medicines. The words are true, and so is the idea: in thousands of settlements there really is nowhere to buy medicine.

The problem lies elsewhere.

These points are already on the road, and we have the numbers. About 15,000 rubles (₽) in revenue a day, roughly 35 sales. That comes to 3,000–4,000 rubles of gross profit per shift.

Now let's subtract. Out of that 3,000–4,000 you have to pay the pharmacist and the driver, fill the tank, and maintain a specially fitted vehicle worth several million rubles.

No need to count any further.

I advise pharmacy chains, take part in developing pricing services for retail, and am affiliated with parso.ru and flexpricer.ru.

I work with pharmacy chains, distributors and manufacturers, and every one of them cares about the economics: maximum profit at minimum cost. The profitability of an average pharmacy runs to low single-digit percentages, and every new requirement that comes without compensation eats into exactly that profit, not some separate reserve set aside in the budget ahead of time for new rules.

So here is my forecast. State and municipal chains will join the project; for them it is a social task, not a business case. A few large federal and interregional chains may sign up too, for the experiment, the image, and their standing with the regions. The rest will watch.

For there to be something to scale once the experiment ends, three things are needed:

- ◆ Subsidies for transport and fuel. Otherwise the vehicle eats the margin before the pharmacist ever gets near it.
- ◆ Tax breaks announced before the start, not declared once the results are in.
- ◆ The right to combine the route with delivery of pre-orders: one trip, two revenues.

The third point is cheaper than the first two and works faster. It costs the budget nothing, and it turns an empty return leg into money.

And one general point, which goes beyond pharmacies on wheels. Business will follow any rules, as long as it learns about them in advance. A year ahead, not three months before they take effect.

Do the math before the start, not after.

SOURCES

- ◆ Experiment established by Federal Law No. 125-FZ of 02.05.2026; runs from 01.09.2026 to 01.09.2029.
- ◆ Revenue figures for the mobile pharmacy point: from my own practice.