



# Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc. (WBA)

Updated October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 by Eli Inkrot

## Key Metrics

<b>Current Price:</b>	\$55	<b>5 Year CAGR Estimate:</b>	13.3%	<b>Volatility Percentile:</b>	60.5%
<b>Fair Value Price:</b>	\$72	<b>5 Year Growth Estimate:</b>	5.0%	<b>Momentum Percentile:</b>	6.7%
<b>% Fair Value:</b>	77%	<b>5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:</b>	5.5%	<b>Growth Percentile:</b>	40.6%
<b>Dividend Yield:</b>	3.3%	<b>5 Year Price Target</b>	\$92	<b>Valuation Percentile:</b>	93.4%
<b>Dividend Risk Score:</b>	A	<b>Retirement Suitability Score:</b>	A	<b>Total Return Percentile:</b>	90.5%

## Overview & Current Events

Walgreens Boots Alliance is the largest retail pharmacy in both the United States and Europe. Through its flagship *Walgreens* business and other business ventures (including equity investments), Walgreens has a presence in more than 25 countries and employs more than 440,000 people. In its leading retail pharmacy business, Walgreens operates approximately 18,750 stores in 11 countries. The \$50 billion market cap company also operates one of the largest global pharmaceutical wholesale and distribution networks, that deliver to upwards of 230,000 pharmacies, doctors, health centers and hospitals each year.

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Walgreens reported Q4 and fiscal year 2019 results for the period ending August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019. For the quarter, sales increased 1.5% to \$34.0 billion, led by a 2.1% increase in the Retail Pharmacy USA segment and a 3.1% increase in the Pharmaceutical Wholesale segment, partially offset by a -6.3% decline in the Retail Pharmacy International portion of the business. Adjusted earnings-per-share decreased -3.7% to \$1.43 during the quarter. For the year, revenue increased 4.1% to \$136.9 billion. Meanwhile, adjusted earnings-per-share decreased -0.5% to \$5.99, on a significantly lower share count, which was more or less in line with prior guidance.

Walgreens also provided an initial fiscal 2020 outlook. The company expects roughly flat growth for adjusted earnings-per-share, with a range of plus or minus 3%. We are introducing a \$6.00 earnings-per-share forecast for 2020 as a result.

## Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2025
<b>EPS</b>	\$2.16	\$2.64	\$2.53	\$2.61	\$2.90	\$3.88	\$4.59	\$5.10	\$6.02	\$5.99	<b>\$6.00</b>	<b>\$7.66</b>
<b>DPS</b>	\$0.59	\$0.80	\$0.95	\$1.14	\$1.28	\$1.37	\$1.46	\$1.53	\$1.64	\$1.76	<b>\$1.83</b>	<b>\$2.57</b>
<b>Shares<sup>1</sup></b>	939	889	944	947	950	1,090	1,083	1,024	952	924	<b>900</b>	<b>820</b>

From 2009 through 2018, Walgreens grew earnings-per-share by 12.9% per annum. This was driven by a combination of factors including solid top-line growth (\$63 billion to \$132 billion), net profit margin expansion (3.7% to 4.6%) and a reduction in the number of shares outstanding. Given Walgreens much higher base from which to grow, we anticipate the company's growth rate slowing from the low double-digits to the mid-single-digits.

Share repurchases and an aging population tailwind will continue to help, but Walgreens' core business is becoming more challenged. We have reduced our forecast to 5% annual growth over the intermediate-term, as the company has run into headwinds as of late, and it is not yet clear whether or not there is a clear runway back to growth. This is especially true given the environment of increased pricing scrutiny in the health care sector today.

## Valuation Analysis

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Now	2025
<b>Avg. P/E</b>	15.9	14.8	13.2	16.3	21.8	20.2	18.0	16.2	11.5	10.3	<b>9.2</b>	<b>12.0</b>
<b>Avg. Yld.</b>	1.7%	2.1%	2.8%	2.7%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	2.3%	2.8%	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>

<sup>1</sup> In millions.

Disclosure: This analyst is long the security discussed in this research report.



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During the past decade shares of Walgreens have traded with an average price-to-earnings ratio of about 15 times earnings. However, this was during a time when the company's growth rate was much more robust. We have reduced this fair value multiple, to 12 times earnings, to better reflect a slower anticipated growth rate moving forward. Still, shares are trading at a compelling valuation in our view.

Moreover, the dividend ought to add meaningfully in the years to come. Walgreens has a storied track record of increasing its dividend every year. Even with an expectation of slowing earnings growth, with a modest payout ratio, there is ample room for the dividend to continue to grow moving forward.

## Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2025
Payout	25%	27%	35%	42%	43%	34%	31%	31%	27%	29%	31%	34%

Walgreens' competitive advantage lies in its vast scale and network in an important and growing industry. However, lately a variety of headwinds have surfaced including reimbursement pressure, lower generic deflation and consumer market challenges that have called this advantage into question to a degree.

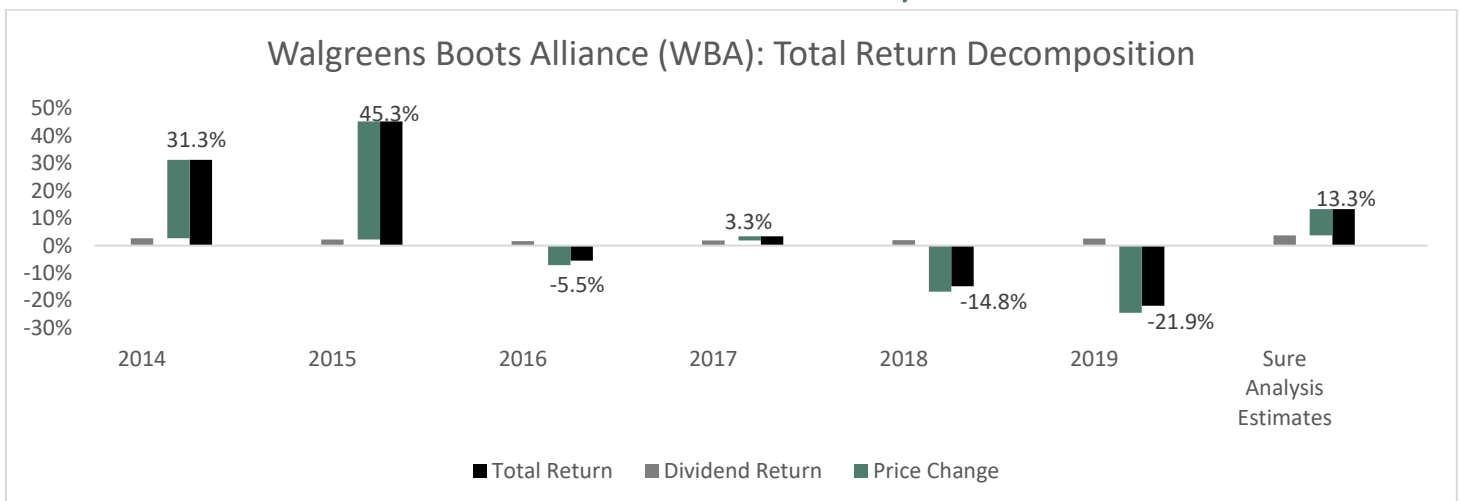
Meanwhile, the payout ratio remains reasonable and should continue to add an income ballast for investors. Furthermore, despite the lack of expected growth this year, it should be noted that Walgreens has put together a very strong record in good times or bad. Walgreens' earnings dipped just 6.9% in 2009, as an illustration.

As of the most recent quarter Walgreens held \$1.0 billion in cash, \$18.7 billion in current assets (including \$9.3 billion in inventory) and \$67.6 billion in total assets (41% of which was goodwill and intangible assets) against \$25.8 billion in current liabilities and \$43.4 billion in total liabilities. Long-term debt stood at \$11.1 billion against underlying earnings power of ~\$5.5 billion annually.

## Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Shares are more or less unchanged since our last report, while earnings expectations have declined slightly. Walgreens has proven to be an exceptional company over the years. The dividend track record is excellent, earnings growth had previously been robust and the company still maintains a relatively conservative stance even while digesting acquisitions. That being said, industry headwinds are starting to gain some momentum. Still, total return potential comes in at 13.3% per annum, stemming from 5% growth, a 3.3% starting yield and the potential for a moderate valuation tailwind. We continue to rate Walgreens as a buy at the current quotation.

## Total Return Breakdown by Year



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## Income Statement Metrics

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Revenue (\$B)	67	72	72	72	76	103	117	118	132	137
Gross Profit	18976	20492	20342	21119	21569	26753	29874	29162	30792	30076
Gross Margin	28.1%	28.4%	28.4%	29.2%	28.2%	25.9%	25.5%	24.7%	23.4%	22.0%
SG&A Exp.	15518	16561	16878	17543	17992	22400	23910	23813	24694	25242
D&A Exp.	1030	1086	1166	1283	1316	1742	1718	1654	1770	2038
Operating Profit	3458	3931	3464	3576	3577	4353	5964	5349	6098	4834
Op. Margin	5.1%	5.4%	4.8%	5.0%	4.7%	4.2%	5.1%	4.5%	4.6%	3.5%
Net Profit	2091	2714	2127	2548	1932	4220	4173	4078	5024	3982
Net Margin	3.1%	3.8%	3.0%	3.5%	2.5%	4.1%	3.6%	3.4%	3.8%	2.9%
Free Cash Flow	2730	2430	2881	3089	2787	4413	6522	5904	6896	3892
Income Tax	1282	1580	1249	1499	1526	1056	997	760	998	588

## Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Assets	26275	27454	33462	35481	37250	68782	72688	66009	68124	67598
Cash & Equivalents	1880	1556	1297	2106	2646	3000	9807	3301	785	1023
Acc. Receivable	2450	2497	2167	2632	3218	6849	6260	6528	6573	7226
Inventories	7378	8044	7036	6852	6076	8678	8956	8899	9565	9333
Goodwill & Int.	3001	3229	3447	3717	3539	28723	25829	25788	28697	27436
Total Liabilities	11875	12607	15226	16027	16633	37482	42407	37735	41435	43446
Accounts Payable	4585	4810	4384	4635	4315	10088	11000	12494	13566	14341
Long-Term Debt	2401	2409	5392	5047	4490	14383	19028	12935	14397	16836
Total Equity	14400	14847	18236	19454	20513	30861	29880	27466	26007	23512
D/E Ratio	0.17	0.16	0.30	0.26	0.22	0.47	0.64	0.47	0.55	0.72

## Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Return on Assets	8.1%	10.1%	7.0%	7.4%	5.3%	8.0%	5.9%	5.9%	7.5%	5.9%
Return on Equity	14.5%	18.6%	12.9%	13.5%	9.7%	16.4%	13.7%	14.2%	18.8%	16.1%
ROIC	12.5%	15.9%	10.4%	10.6%	7.8%	11.9%	8.8%	9.0%	12.2%	9.7%
Shares Out.	939	889	944	947	950	1,090	1,083	1,024	952	924
Revenue/Share	68.25	78.08	81.39	75.60	79.15	98.15	107.55	109.61	132.20	148.20
FCF/Share	2.76	2.63	3.27	3.23	2.89	4.19	5.98	5.47	6.93	4.21

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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