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SB 355

February 13, 2020

TO: Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 355 – Health Occupations - Pharmacists - Administration of Vaccinations

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 355.

Vaccinations are safe and effective.¹ They protect children from serious communicable diseases and the life-altering complications from those diseases. The CDC estimates that vaccinations will prevent more than 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths among children born in the last 20 years.²

However, over recent years there has been resurgence in vaccine preventable disease across the nation, including Maryland. Through the first five months of 2019, there were more measles cases in the U.S. than during any full year since 1992.³ That same year Maryland had five cases of measles, more than the two prior years combined.⁴

With recent outbreaks in vaccine-preventable diseases, pharmacists are an under-utilized resource to promote vaccination and protect public health. One study found that in states that moved to allow pharmacists to administer influenza immunizations, the overall immunization

¹ "Vaccine Safety." 2020. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html>

² Whitney et al. 25 April 2014. "Benefits from Immunization During the Vaccines for Children Program Era — United States, 1994–2013." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*; 63(16): 352-355.

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0424-immunization-program.html>

³ Silverman et al. 2019. "Vaccination over Parental Objection - Should Adolescents Be Allowed to Consent to Receiving Vaccines?" *New England Journal of Medicine*; 381(2):104-106.

⁴ "Measles." 12 June 2019. Maryland Department of Health.

<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/IMMUN/Pages/Measles.aspx>

rate from 33% in 2003 to 41% in 2013.⁵ Pharmacists are already expertly trained and safely providing vaccinations to children and adolescents in 27 other states.⁶

This bill provides more patients with direct access to services by allowing pharmacists to administer vaccinations to a greater portion of the community. Collaboration among physicians, healthcare providers, pharmacists and parents is critical to increasing vaccination rates. This bill protects the health of Maryland residents by allowing greater access to vaccines and protecting children against vaccine-preventable disease.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 355.

⁵ Drozd et al. 2017. "Impact of Pharmacist Immunization Authority on Seasonal Influenza Immunization Rates Across States." *Clinical Therapeutics* 39(8): 1563-1580. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28781217>

⁶ Sederstrom, J. 2020. "An Update on Pharmacists' Vaccination Authority". *Drug Topics*. <https://www.drugtopics.com/vaccination-and-immunization/update-pharmacists-vaccination-authority>