



Date: February 13, 2020

To: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair

From: Aliyah N. Horton, CAE, Executive Director, 240-688-7808

Cc: Members, Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

RE: SUPPORT SB 440-Pharmacists – Aids for the Cessation of Tobacco Product Use – Prescribing and Dispensing

The Maryland Pharmacists Association (MPhA) supports SB 440: Pharmacists – Aids for the Cessation of Tobacco Product Use – Prescribing and Dispensing.

MPhA founded in 1882 is the only state-wide professional society representing all practicing pharmacists in Maryland. Our mission is to strengthen the profession of pharmacy, advocate for all Maryland Pharmacists and promote excellence in pharmacy practice. In doing so, we prioritize and value the health and well-being of Maryland residents; safe and effective use of medications and health care devices; collaboration among health care professionals and organizations; professional competence and responsible legislation and regulations.

According to the Maryland Department of Health’s smoking data (2016), **7,500 adults in Maryland die each year due to tobacco-related causes and hundreds of thousands more suffer from tobacco-related diseases such as COPD, emphysema or cancers.**

2020 Surgeon General Report Supports Pharmacists Interventions for Tobacco Cessation

“Clinical interventions for smoking cessation are critical if we are to achieve our goal of eliminating the devastating effects of smoking on public health. Primary care physicians, nurses, **pharmacists**, and other providers in all medical disciplines and in all healthcare environments should take advantage of these opportunities to inform and encourage smokers to quit. Doing so could **enable half a million smokers to quit each year.**”¹

“Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence:

- Any level of treatment is beneficial, and more intensive and longer behavioral and pharmacologic treatment is generally better.
- Physicians, psychologists, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, and numerous other healthcare professionals can treat nicotine addiction in smokers. Thus, by extension, the various settings in which such professionals work represent appropriate venues for providing these services.
- Behavioral interventions and FDA-approved pharmacotherapies are effective for treating nicotine dependence. A combination of behavioral interventions and pharmacotherapy is the optimal treatment based on overwhelming scientific evidence, with superiority in efficacy over either intervention alone.”²

¹ Smoking Cessation: A Report of the Surgeon General, <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-cessation-sgr-full-report.pdf> (accessed January 2020)

² IBID

Smoking Kills; Pharmacists Can Help

Smoking continues to be a serious public health problem in the United States. Not only do people who smoke have higher healthcare costs, an estimated 480,000 people die each year from smoking-related illness.³ With e-cigarette use on the rise, and data to show teen e-cig users are much more likely to start smoking cigarettes, tobacco use is a problem unlikely to go away soon.⁴

Pharmacists are highly accessible and ready to help people quit smoking. Pharmacists are available at convenient locations, for extended hours, and on weekends and pharmacy students are trained on tobacco cessation techniques. And research shows that pharmacist-provided tobacco cessation services are just as effective as those provided by other healthcare providers.⁵

Tobacco Cessation Aids are Safe and Effective

Quitting smoking is difficult but tobacco cessation aids, paired with counseling, can help. Research shows that patients who use a tobacco cessation medication are much more likely to quit. Recognizing the safety and efficacy of varenicline (Chantix) and bupropion (Zyban), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) removed their labels' Black Box Warnings in 2016 – something never done before. The change was based on very strong research, the EAGLES study, which showed that varenicline and bupropion had a similar safety profile to that of over-the-counter nicotine replacement products.⁶

Give Maryland Residents Access to Important Tobacco Cessation Services

Pharmacists are a great solution for increasing access to tobacco cessation services and tobacco cessation medications. Any concerns related to side effects or other rare, unlikely safety concerns pale in comparison to the fact that for every three people who continue to smoke, two of them will die of a smoking related illness.⁷ No matter what statistics are reviewed, helping people quit smoking will always be the best outcome from a public health perspective.

MPhA urges a favorable report of SB 440.

³ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6208a8.htm?s_cid=mm6208a8_w

⁴ Miech, RA, et al.. Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975–2017: Volume I, Secondary school students. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan (2018) at page 14, available at http://monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-vol1_2017.pdf (accessed Feb. 24, 2019).

National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Teens and E-cigarettes, available at <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/infographics/teens-e-cigarettes> (accessed Feb. 24, 2019).

⁵ DeVoe JE, et al., Receipt of Preventive Care Among Adults: Insurance Status and Usual Source of Care, *AJPH*, 2003;93(5):786-91.

⁶ Anthenelli RM, et al. Neuropsychiatric safety and efficacy of varenicline, bupropion, and nicotine patch in smokers with and without psychiatric disorders (EAGLES): a double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled clinical trial. *Lancet* 2016. 387(10037):2507e2520.

⁷ Banks E, et al. Tobacco smoking and all-cause mortality in a large Australian cohort study: findings from a mature epidemic with current low smoking prevalence. *BMC Medicine* 2015. 13(38). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-015-0281-z>