



Date February 12, 2020

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Bill: HB 87 – Public Health – Immunizations – Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Position: Support

This is a letter in SUPPORT of the spirit of House Bill 87 regarding the ability of a minor to consent to an immunization (vaccination).

The Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants (MdAPA) represents the PA profession in Maryland. We are dedicated to improving health care for the residents of Maryland, of all ages. PAs practice medicine in all possible fields and encounter individuals with all manner of illnesses, injuries and diseases. Furthermore, we hold ourselves to providing the highest quality, evidenced based care possible. In a time when we are facing novel infectious diseases and a return of diseases once nearly eradicated, immunizations remain one of the biggest public health successes. And when stories break about new outbreaks from across the globe, one of the first questions is often “how soon until we can get a vaccine to prevent this disease”? This is in spite of an extremely vocal but relatively small vaccine hesitation contingent.

Immunizations exist to protect against infectious diseases. But, this is also the first time ever that we can give a young person a series of injections that will also protect them against cancer. If we trust a person under eighteen to be able to make decisions on their own behalf to be tested and treated for sexually transmitted infections, to choose how they wish to prevent pregnancy, to recognize that they need help for mental distress and substance abuse, it stands to reason that they should be able to request and receive a potential life saving immunization. The PAs of Maryland fully stand behind eliminating as many barriers to care as possible.

Most sincerely,

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