



Board of Nursing

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall,
Secretary

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: HB0087 – Public Health – Immunizations – Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act) –
Letter of Support**

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

The Maryland Board of Nursing (“the Board”) is submitting this letter of support for HB0087 – Public Health – Immunizations – Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act). This bill authorizes a health care provider to provide an immunization to a minor without the consent of certain individuals if the minor is at least 16 years of age, consents to the immunization, and the health care provider determines the minor is mature and capable of giving informed consent with regard to the immunization. The bill also authorizes a health care provider to provide an immunization to a minor under certain provisions of the Act whether or not a parent is not reasonably available or objects to the provision of the immunization.

The Board feels that this bill addresses the issue that the inability of minors to consent for vaccines is likely one barrier to vaccination. Allowing a 16 year old whom the provider has assessed as being mature enough to give informed consent would promote access to vaccinations as well as improve the completion of a vaccination series.

“Although the proportion of adolescents who receive recommended vaccines has steadily increased, levels of adolescent vaccination coverage are suboptimal and below levels of coverage for recommended vaccines among young children.”¹ According to some exploratory research, “Older adolescents are frequently seen in clinical settings without parents or legal guardians.”² Additionally, research suggests that “interventions to increase adolescent vaccination should consider strategies that increase the ability of unaccompanied minors, particularly older minors, to receive vaccines within the context of legal, ethical and professional guidelines”.³

For the reasons discussed above, the Board of Nursing submits this letter of support for HB0087.

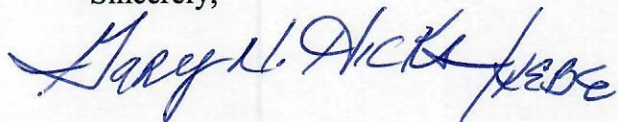
¹ Carol A. Ford M.D., (2016) Minor Consent and Delivery of Adolescent Vaccines, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, p 2.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p 11.

For more information, please contact Rhonda Scott, Deputy Director, at (410) – 585 – 1953 (rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov) or Karen E. B. Evans, Executive Director, at (410) – 585 – 1914 (karene.evans@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary N. Hicks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "H".

Gary N. Hicks
Board President

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.