

January 30, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk  
Chair, Health and Government Operations  
House Office Building  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD

RE: Support HB 76 - Pharmacists-Administration of Vaccinations-Expanded Authority and Reporting Requirements

Dear Chairperson Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 76.

Maryland pharmacists have provided routine immunizations since 2005. I have personally supported immunization efforts in our state by providing immunization certificate training to pharmacists and student pharmacists for almost 20 years. I have also provided annual continuing education to ensure that pharmacists have the most up to date information on vaccinations, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations, and any regulatory updates impacting immunization delivery.

In addition to training, I implemented various immunization clinics serving Maryland's communities. In Fall 2021, the University of Maryland, Baltimore partnered with the Baltimore City Health Department, Maryland Partnership for Prevention, and practitioners from the University of Maryland Midtown Medical Center to host a pediatric vaccination clinic to help children meet school vaccination requirements. The event was a success with two full days of vaccinations provided to children and their families. The most challenging aspect of the clinic was limited vaccine availability. We had to turn many families away. We referred them to other resources when available, but it was apparent that families needed more sites where they could easily access immunizations for their children.

While the clinic I just described helped many families, it required significant coordination between multiple organizations to conduct the event. It was evident that a more efficient method for meeting childhood vaccination needs is needed to supplement existing vaccination services at pediatric offices and health departments. Maryland pharmacists were authorized during the COVID-19 pandemic to administer routine childhood vaccinations. With more than 1,200 pharmacy sites in Maryland, pharmacies provide families with even more options for receiving vaccines for their children and at convenient times that meet their life schedules. Pharmacists are often the most accessible health care provider. In addition, through the required entry of immunization records via Immunet, pharmacists will be able to view vaccination records and meet the documentation requirements set forth in regulations to ensure complete vaccination records are accessible by all providers.

As of April 2023, at least 40 states allow pharmacists to administer vaccinations to children age 7 and older. It is important to continue allowing Maryland pharmacists to support the public health needs of their communities by helping keep children up to date with their vaccinations. Regular engagement with pharmacists will also provide the opportunity to remind families of the need for regular checkups with a pediatrician or primary care provider.

Thank you to this committee for their review of HB 76. Maryland pharmacists like myself appreciate your support in allowing the continued administration of vaccinations to children ages 5 and up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cherokee Layson-Wolf".

Cherokee Layson-Wolf, PharmD, FAPhA, BCACP  
Professor of Practice, Sciences, and Health Outcomes Research  
University of Maryland School of Pharmacy