

January 29, 2024

VIA EMAIL

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:

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy appreciates the opportunity to comment on HB 76. As drafted, HB 76 expands the ability for pharmacists to provide vaccinations to patients age 5 and up who meet the specific requirements stated in the bill.

Since the approval of pharmacist-provided influenza vaccinations during the 2006 legislative session, pharmacists have had the ability to contribute to the public health of the citizens of Maryland by providing additional locations where individuals are able to obtain vaccines. Maryland pharmacists were instrumental in administration of vaccines during H1N1, and pharmacists administered more than 270 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines nationally through September 2022. (Grabenstein J. Essential services: quantifying the contributions of America's pharmacists in COVID-19 clinical interventions. [J Am Pharm Assoc \(2003\)](#). 2022 November-December; 62(6): 1929-1945.e1. Published online 2022 Aug 18. [doi:10.1016/j.japh.2022.08.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japh.2022.08.010)).

Pursuant to HB 1040 /SB 736 Health Occupations -Pharmacists Administration of Children's Vaccines -Study and Temporary Authority, the Maryland Department of Health was requested to complete an evaluation of the ability of the health care system to provide vaccines to children, current vaccination rates for children and ability of the community to access vaccine administration for children(attached). The PREP Act allowed for administration of pediatric during the COVID-19 emergency, and the report does demonstrate pharmacists administering vaccines to children aged 3 and up, assisting with ensuring these children have adequate protection against vaccine preventable diseases. The report stated there were over 1200 pharmacies in Maryland, greatly increasing the needed accessibility of vaccines services to families at convenient dates and times, significantly increasing the available sites to receive vaccines within Maryland. With many pharmacies having evening and weekend hours, this greatly increases accessibility for families to receive vaccines services. From July 2021-June 2022, over 82,000 vaccines doses were administered to children aged 3-18 in pharmacies. At the conclusion of this report, the Maryland Department of Health "strongly recommends making permanent the authority for pharmacists to order and administer CDC recommended vaccinations to children ages 3-18.", thus supporting the intent of HB 76 to expand scope of pharmacist-provided vaccines to children age 5 and up. The increased age (3 years to 5 years old) was adjusted from previous proposed legislation to address concerns from prior legislative hearings.

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy is committed to supporting the education and training needs of immunizing pharmacists and has actively conducted Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)-approved certificate training to pharmacists since 2006 that meets the requirements set forth in current regulations and redefined in HB 76. In addition to providing this training to student pharmacists, several faculty members at the school provide vaccine continuing education to Maryland pharmacists on a regular basis. During these trainings, UMB faculty members reinforce Maryland specific vaccination rules, including any stipulations of Maryland regulations, such as reinforcing the importance of well-child visits and referrals to primary care provider when needed. Approval of HB 76 would allow pharmacists to support the efforts of pediatricians and health departments to meet the vaccination needs of children, including helping families meet vaccination requirements for primary and secondary schools.

We thank the members of the Health and Government Operations committee for their consideration of this letter and the testimony of our colleagues in support of HB 76.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah L.J. Michel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah L.J. Michel, PhD
Dean and Professor