



February 27, 2026

To Members of the Maryland House of Delegates Health Committee,

As the largest national nonprofit advocacy group focused solely on education and awareness of the severity of influenza, Families Fighting Flu strongly supports [HB 1135](#), legislation that will expand Maryland pharmacists' authority to prescribe and administer vaccinations to residents across the state.

Families Fighting Flu was founded more than 20 years ago by a small group of parents, all of whom lost a young child to the flu. At the time, their children were not recommended to be vaccinated against the flu because of their ages. Over the next several years, with the backing of scientific evidence and these families' stories, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices changed its recommendation, which stood until earlier this year—that everyone aged 6 months and older should get an annual flu shot.

Families Fighting Flu, now representing hundreds of families and advocates who have been impacted by the flu, still supports this recommendation; however, we acknowledge that the federal government's changes to the recommendations have caused confusion and could impede access to medications this flu season and in the future. That is why we strongly support legislation to expand access and availability to all vaccines.

Pharmacists play a significant role in many Americans' healthcare routines. In fact, [studies](#) have found that nearly 90 percent of Americans live within a 5-mile radius of a pharmacy, and pharmacists are among [the most trusted](#) when it comes to vaccine information. Pharmacy hours are often more flexible, providing options for working families and parents.

Convenience and access barriers remain a significant issue when it comes to vaccination. Members of Families Fighting Flu who have either lost a family member to the flu, or who themselves have survived influenza, but live with life-altering complications, often tell us that they believe in getting the flu vaccine, but instead, just 'didn't get to it.'

Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in flu hospitalizations and deaths, including record-setting numbers of pediatric flu deaths in recent years, due to declining vaccination rates.

Families Fighting Flu strongly believes in any legislation that will expand access to influenza and all other vaccines and urges you to vote to pass HB 1135. Lives depend on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michele Slafkosky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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