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SB 440

February 13, 2020

TO: Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Finance
FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director, Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 440 – Pharmacists – Aids for the Cessation of Tobacco Product Use
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 440, which authorizes a pharmacist who meets the requirements of certain regulations to prescribe and dispense aids for the cessation of the use of tobacco products.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, and is routinely sold in pharmacies.¹ Although smoking rates have declined in the United States, tobacco use still causes about 480,000 deaths each year. In light of the health consequences, seven in ten current smokers want to quit. Evidence suggests that quit attempts are most successful when supported by evidence-based treatments, including pharmaceutical aids and counseling services.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), a panel of experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine recommends interventions based on a rigorous assessment of peer-reviewed evidence, found that a combination of pharmacotherapy and behavioral interventions was most effective in assisting individuals to quit smoking.² The suggested pharmacotherapy is Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). The purpose of NRT is to aid in smoking cessation by replacing the use of tobacco products, and with proper use and a tapering regime.

Pharmacists are well-positioned and currently an untapped resource to initiate treatment and support individuals throughout the quitting process. Since pharmacists are located in

¹ Apollonio, DE; Pimentel, (2019). Placement and sales of tobacco products and nicotine replacement therapy in tobacco-free and tobacco-selling pharmacies in Northern California: an observational study.

² 2017, Tobacco Control Network; "Access to Tobacco Cessation Medication through Pharmacists."

communities and can typically be seen without appointments, they are often more readily available than other healthcare providers and can respond quickly to modify interventions. In a 2007 review, researchers concluded that early studies “collectively demonstrate the positive impact that pharmacists can have on increasing smoking cessation.”

States like New Mexico, California, Idaho, and Oregon have already expressly authorized pharmacists to provide a tiered approach to assist smokers in quitting. This includes brief advice with nicotine replacement therapy and more intensive advice plus nicotine replacement therapy. Smoking cessation is a dynamic process that smokers move through in the determination to quit smoking. Pharmacists are trained to assess the readiness of the smoker to quit smoking. They can provide information ranging from the health benefits of quitting to the most appropriate cessation tools. It would be advantageous and cost effective to cessation resources at the point of sale of other commonly utilized medications.³

In Baltimore, there are 20.9 stores that sell tobacco per 10,000 residents. There are 5.9 deaths per 10,000 residents due to lung cancer. Lung cancer is the most prevalent cause of cancer death in Baltimore City. These startling statistics drive the need to create innovative strategies to assist Baltimore City residents in their efforts to quit smoking. Maryland has leveraged a variety of strategies to ensure its citizens that want to quit smoking have access to effective, evidenced-based smoking cessation options. This bill increases access to tobacco cessation services by leveraging pharmacists through collaborative practice agreements and statewide protocol. With 50 local pharmacies and 17 located in hospitals, Baltimore City would benefit from the implementation of this bill.⁴

SB 440 represents an innovative health promotion strategy to educate residents and build capacity to reduce cancer mortality as well as the harmful effects of smoking. This bill will build on existing Baltimore City efforts to expand knowledge about the harmful effects of smoking and leverage resources for smoking cessation.

For the forgoing reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 440.

³ El Hajj, M. S., Kheir, N., Al Mulla, A. M., Al-Badriyeh, D., Al Kaddour, A., Mahfoud, Z. R., Salehi, M., ... Fanous, N. (2015). Assessing the effectiveness of a pharmacist-delivered smoking cessation program in the State of Qatar: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial. *Trials*, 16, 65. doi:10.1186/s13063-015-0570-z

⁴ Baltimore City Health Department Community Health Assessment 2017.