



February 13, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Senate Education Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support– SB 545: Pharmacists - Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medication

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works to ensure available, accessible and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS supports Senate Bill 545: Pharmacists - Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medications (SB 545) as many of our patients would benefit from better access to long-acting maintenance medications that treat conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or substance use disorder. Currently, a pharmacist can administer flu shots and other vaccines. SB 545 seeks to expand a pharmacist's ability to administer injections of prescriptions that MPS's members prescribe, such as haloperidol, risperidone, and naltrexone (Vivitrol). Access to maintenance injectables would hopefully avoid patient relapse due to nonadherence to their medications.

While this expansion may be good for patient care to have the flexibility and convenience of getting a monthly shot at the local pharmacy, MPS believes that the effectiveness is contingent on communication between the prescriber and the pharmacist. We thank the sponsor of the bill along with the proponents for accepting an amendment last session, and keeping it in the bill this session, that requires such communication.

If passed, MPS acknowledges that the Maryland Department of Health will have to develop robust regulations around pharmacist training to include screening for Neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS), Tardive dyskinesia (TD), and dystonia before



the shot. In addition, MPS believes that for some drugs, there should be a time window between the physician's last clinical assessment and the shot administration by the pharmacist. For example, clozapine has clinical checkpoints when attempting to mitigate the effects of schizophrenia over time. MPS looks forward to being a part of that regulatory discussion.

For all the reasons stated above, MPS asks the committee for a favorable report. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Legislative Action Committee for the Maryland Psychiatric Society