



The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health & Government Operations Committee
241 House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support: HB656: Pharmacists - Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medications

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I support HB\ 656 because it will increase patient access to care and pharmacist services. I practice in a Federally Qualified Health Center as a credentialed HIV pharmacist and as a part time community pharmacist on the Eastern Shore. Overall, I've spent about 25 years in community pharmacies. Patients deserve to have access to all their medications at all times. Currently, there is a massive gap in the provision of quality care concerning injectable medications.

I have regularly found patients searching for a provider willing to administer their prescribed medication. Take for instance my patient who was recently released from a drug rehab clinic and was provided an electronic prescription for Vivitrol to my pharmacy, to help her stay off of opioids. She shows up, but has no provider to administer the medication. The local doctors' offices did not prescribe the medication and will not administer to her and the urgent care clinic will not administer to her. I stand in front of her as she is crying and fearful of a drug relapse, willing and capable of providing the injection, but unable to do anything other than recommend a visit to the Emergency Room.

Clearly, pharmacists are accessible to patients, have shown an ability to provide safe injections in the arena of vaccinations, are equipped to provide patient care, and are well placed to make a difference in medication adherence. Administration of long acting psychiatric medications and substance dependence medications are a way for pharmacists to engage in patient care that will increase adherence and relieve the burden from clinic offices. Often, I've had patients request injection of their hormones, contraceptives, or vitamin B12 shots. In the HIV setting, a soon to be approved, long acting injectable is in the trial stages. I would love to be able to assist my patients by administering this long acting injectable to help them stay healthy over the long term.

I support this bill because it frees primary care providers to provide primary care. It frees psychiatry offices to provide psychiatric care. It allows patients to get their medications when they need them, where they are dispensed. It allows pharmacists to work at the top of their licenses in order to free time for physicians to do the things that only they are trained and allowed to do. Please strongly consider supporting this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard DeBenedetto".

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