



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Testimony on: SB0736 – Health Occupations – Pharmacists – Administration of Vaccinations

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 2, 2021

Bill Contact: Senator Malcolm Augustine

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all of our diverse communities. Overcoming health disparities is an important DTMG goal and promoting children’s access to vaccinations using pharmacies would help achieve that goal.

One of the best ways to increase herd immunity and protect the population from preventable diseases, particularly for children, the elderly, and underserved communities, is to increase the availability of vaccines and the ease of getting them. SB0736 will help support these vital efforts by allowing any CDC-recommended vaccination to be administered to patients age nine and above by pharmacists without a prescription or prior doctor visit, maintaining current requirements that primary care physicians be notified. Pharmacists are trained to provide vaccines to children nine and over and are already giving flu shots to children. Pharmacists in eleven other states administer all vaccines without a prescription.

SB0736 will help families by providing more convenient ways to seek immunizations, while still maintaining communication with providers’ offices who may then contact patients regarding upkeep of wellness visits. SB0736 will particularly help the 20% of kids who don’t regularly go to well-child visits. These children are likely to be low-income, racial minorities, immigrants, or living in rural areas. Administration of vaccines by pharmacists will also makes booster shots more convenient for parents with work schedule or transportation issues. This bill is especially critical during the coronavirus pandemic and the urgent need to vaccinate our children as soon as possible after the vaccine becomes available for them.

SB0736 does not reduce the requirement for parental consent. It just increases access for parents who choose vaccines, by eliminating an unnecessary barrier in Maryland law that prevents families from getting their older children vaccinated at the pharmacy without first stopping by the doctor’s office for a prescription – and having to pay another co-pay.

For all of these reasons, DTMG strongly supports HB1040 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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