

SB736: Health Occupations - Pharmacists - Administration of Vaccinations
OPPOSE
Love Maryland PAC

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Our organization is very concerned about this bill and its potential impacts on the safety of children in our state and citizens that get prescriptions filled at pharmacies.

This bill came before the committee last session (SB355), with a minimum age of 9. It received an Unfavorable Report from the committee. We are very concerned to see that it is resubmitted with an even younger age of 3-years-old.

In the hearing on SB355 last session, the bill's sponsor, Senator Augustine, testified that there are pharmacies in our state that are struggling financially and that this bill would help to give them more income. We disagree with any bill that would reduce safety for children just to make a business more money.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/health/pharmacists-medication-errors.html>

- Young children are not vaccinated like adults. They have a complicated “recommended” schedule by the CDC that requires an assessment to determine actual vaccine appropriateness. Issues such as allergies, diagnoses (autoimmunity, immune system dysfunction, immune system suppressing drugs), current health status, and previous adverse reactions to vaccinations are just some of the things that pediatricians consider before determining what vaccine a child should have in a visit. They do not go by a checklist. At well-visits, pediatricians perform a full physical examination and medical history prior to determining vaccine readiness. Pharmacists do not have this expertise.
- No one is liable if a pharmacist gives an inappropriate vaccine, or if they administer it incorrectly into a tiny 3-year-old arm. The Federal 1986 National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act removed liability from vaccine makers as well as the provider that administers the vaccine.
- If this bill were to become law, some children would never go to see the pediatrician again. Pediatric well visits include a thorough physical exam and screenings for physical, mental and developmental milestones. These screenings allow referrals to help children who are showing signs of developmental struggles or other health diagnoses.

- Last year, the New York Times profiled the chaos that is occurring in American pharmacies. It is dangerous to have pharmacists stop filling a prescription every time a child gets in line for vaccinations.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/health/pharmacists-medication-errors.html>
- SIRVA (Shoulder Injury Related to Vaccine Administration) injuries have increased since people have started getting vaccines in pharmacies. This is a huge risk for a 3-year-old child who will not sit still and has a very small arm.

We respectfully ask the Committee for an Unfavorable report, especially this session when it is so difficult for citizens to testify.

Love Maryland PAC
Silver Spring, MD