

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chairman
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice-Chairwoman
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 2 West Wing
Annapolis Maryland, MD 21401

RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION IN SUPPORT OF SB19

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and committee members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) in support of Senate Bill 19. This legislation alters the definition of “maintenance injectable medication” to include medications that are administered by injection and that treats sexually transmitted infections. These long-acting injectables (LAIs) when administered by pharmacist improve access to care and promotes better health outcomes.

NCPA represents the interest of America’s community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 19,400 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 395 independent community pharmacies in Maryland. These Maryland pharmacies filled over 22 million prescriptions last year, impacting thousands of patients in your state. Our members are small business owners who are among America’s most accessible healthcare providers and they provide an expanding set of health care services to millions of patients every day.

Over 90% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy¹ and more than any other segment of the pharmacy industry, independent community pharmacies are often located in underserved rural and urban areas. These pharmacies are frequently the most accessible healthcare providers in many communities and are vital in the provision of immunizations, testing and other services. LAIs have been important tools to treat schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other mental health issues but there have been barriers to this care such as scheduling challenges, limited personnel and maintaining inventory of the medications. Community pharmacies are well positioned to alleviate those barriers with their expertise and accessibility.

¹ NCPDP Pharmacy File, ArcGIS Census Tract File, NACDS Economics Department.

SB19 will increase patient access treatments for mental health and STI's and assist in reducing spending related to mental health and other chronic conditions. To protect improve access to quality and timely care, we respectfully ask you to support SB19.

Thank you for your time and consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me at belawoe.akwakoku@ncpa.org or (703) 600 – 1179.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Belawoe Akwakoku". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Belawoe Akwakoku
Manager, State Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacy Association