

Hello Distinguished Members of the Maryland Senate,

I am writing today as a Maryland citizen and registered pharmacist in opposition of SB839 and SB840.

I hope by now the Senate realizes that vaccination for Sars-Cov-2 does not significantly prevent infection or transmission of the virus. My own Montgomery County, MD is one of the most vaccinated in the country, yet during the height of Omicron we experienced 5000 positive tests in one day; approximately one in every 200 citizens. However, at no time did our hospitals become overrun or even rise above the 'Low' occupancy threshold of 80%, which would be a normal rate during a non-covid year. Current occupancy is 64.7%, a level at which is extremely low and rarely seen.

Therefore, I am opposed to vaccination mandates and passports as they are ineffective in preventing disease, as proven in NY, DC, and most of Europe. Now that the CDC is finally focusing on morbidity and mortality as opposed to "cases", we need to follow suit and end all exorbitant and wasteful state funded testing, tracing, vaccination, and electronic passports. What purpose does a passport serve if a vaccinated, yet infected individual can walk into an establishment while a healthy, unvaccinated individual is prevented from entry?

Our tax dollars must be spent on recovery from the heavy-handed restrictions that caused so much damage. Our schools need therapists to treat the anxious and depressed students who are so scared of a 10-day quarantine with no academic support. Many will not remove their masks to eat lunch s they fear being traced and quarantined, despite being vaccinated and already having covid.

In a recent Board of Education meeting, I listened to MCPS members state that they cannot afford to pay licensed therapists their current rate and directed their team to investigate hiring student therapists in training. This is appalling, especially since MCPS led country in virtual days of learning. Let's use our state surplus to heal our kids and support businesses that were unjustly affected. Please end the idea of vaccine passports, quarantining healthy people, etc. now and in the future. Vaccinations have been available for a long time and those hesitant accept their risk. Please return to normal now.

Even though I am no longer a retail pharmacist, I am opposed to expanding vaccination privileges for pharmacists to administer all vaccines to 3-year-olds and up. Pharmacists are already too busy to comply with mandatory counseling regulations, much less keep up with the constant interruption of vaccination. Interruption is a primary cause of dispensing errors.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6499714/>. However, we all know retail chains will jump on this financial windfall and ask even more of their pharmacists and technicians, who are quitting now in record numbers. <https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/national-international/im-so-burned-out-pharmacy-staffs-struggling-to-keep-up-with-ever-rising-demands/2765456/>. Please do not aggravate an already dangerous situation by adding this burden to our pharmacists.

In conclusion, please let our state end the fixation on Covid mitigation and let our citizens return to pre-pandemic life. Remove all mask and vaccination mandates in workplaces, schools (UMD especially) and anywhere else, as well as required quarantining. The time is now.

Sincerely,

*Peter D'Orazio*

Peter D'Orazio, RPh.