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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SB 19

Pharmacists – Administration of Maintenance Injectable Medications – Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections

Background:

- The General Assembly passed SB 84 in 2021 which authorized pharmacists to administer maintenance injectable medications to treat a “chronic need, condition, or disorder.”
- SB 84 enabled better access to treatments relating to psychiatric disorders, substance use disorders, contraception, and vitamins.
- SB 84 aligned Maryland with a majority of states that allow pharmacists to administer non-vaccine injectable medications.
- Injectable treatments can be preferred to oral medications and can be easier for patients to adhere to a regimen that does not require daily dosages.
- When an individual is on an injectable medication regimen, it can be easier to obtain this treatment at the pharmacy rather than making a doctor’s appointment.

What Does SB 19 Do?

- SB 19 would modify the definition of a “maintenance injectable medication” to include those that can **“treat a sexually transmitted infection and is not a vaccine.”**
- SB 19 would authorize pharmacists to administer STI injectable treatments such as antibiotics to address conditions like gonorrhea and syphilis.
- SB 19 maintains the collaboration between doctors and pharmacists by ensuring that first-time treatments are to be made by the pharmacist only with explicit permission by a physician.

Why SB 19 is Needed:

- Maryland has seen dramatic increases in STIs (including gonorrhea, syphilis, and chlamydia) over the past decade.
 - There has been a 153% increase in syphilis infections between 2010 and 2019.

- Rates of congenital syphilis (syphilis passed to a fetus or baby during pregnancy or birth) have increased in recent years, with an 84% increase in Maryland from 2014 to 2018.
- In 2019, Maryland ranked 12th in the country in the rate of cases of chlamydia, with just over 586 cases reported per 100,000 people.
- Utilizing oral antibiotic therapies for STIs (**instead of CDC-recommended injectable antibiotics**) can increase the risk of treatment failure and foster the development of multi-drug resistant gonorrhea.
- Untreated STIs in the United States cost 16 billion dollars in lifetime direct medical costs and can cause serious medical conditions including fetal death or disability (syphilis), female infertility (chlamydia and gonorrhea), and heart disease or dementia (syphilis).

What SB 19 Accomplishes:

- SB 19 expands pharmacist authorization to provide injectable medications to patients with STIs.
- SB 19 enhances patient access to injectable STI treatments by authorizing more providers to offer treatment.
- SB 19 authorizes a new pathway by which communities can address the proliferation of STIs in Maryland.
- SB 19 creates additional small business opportunities for local independent pharmacies to provide access to more patients in their communities.

Sponsor Amendments:

- SB 19 is being introduced with sponsor amendments that conform the bill to its House cross-file HB 229. The amendments offer a clarified definition of medical injectables to treat STIs and do not materially influence the aim of the bill.