



A Network Of
Independently Owned
Pharmacies

Testimony offered on behalf of:

EPIC PHARMACIES, INC.

IN SUPPORT OF:

SB 0064?– HIV Prescription Drugs – Dispensing by Pharmacists and Insurance Requirements

Hearing 1/31/23 at 1:00PM

EPIC Pharmacies Supports SB 0064 – HIV Prescription Drugs – Prescribing and Dispensing by Pharmacists and Insurance Requirements.

During this Covid Pandemic, pharmacies and pharmacists have been nimble in our ability to quickly undergo laboratory training for testing that is CLIA waived. Pharmacists also quickly underwent training to prepare and administer various Covid vaccinations with various dosing and storage requirements. Adding HIV testing to current CLIA lab waivers can occur relatively quickly because of the infrastructure already in place because of the Covid pandemic. Pharmacists that administer vaccinations or who elect to prescribe birth control pills also must undergo additional training before deciding to expand their practice into these specialties. HIV PREP and PEP will be no different.

My pharmacy in Mt. Vernon sees patients that currently have HIV infection, and HIV negative patients that engage in activities that increase their risk of contracting HIV infection. Our treatment of HIV positive patients allows us the luxury of stocking HIV antivirals that are not always stocked at every pharmacy. We also sometimes see patients that do not have an ideal medical support system in place and do not really have a primary care doctor. Additionally, we have very good relationships and a daily dialogue with HIV providers and clinics in the area, including the University of Maryland Thrive Program, and Chase Brexton Health Services.

We have no desire to replace the comprehensive care that our patients get from their medical providers. On the contrary, our goal is to prevent HIV infection when timing is critical, and to triage any patient that currently does not have a medical provider to one of these comprehensive HIV care centers.

Regarding cost concerns, Medicaid pays \$3,689.00 each month per patient for the most commonly prescribed medication to treat HIV infection. This is only for medication. This does not include labs, doctors, social workers, mental health workers, and the ongoing stress and trauma to the newly infected HIV patient and family. How can we in good conscience afford not to prevent HIV infection when we have that ability?

EPIC Pharmacies support efforts to reducing barriers for patients to receive both pre and post exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection. The pharmacist is often the most accessible health care provider and patients see their pharmacist an average of twenty-four times a year in a setting that is comfortable for the patient as well as in a setting that is not identified with any diagnosis or disease.

As such, EPIC Pharmacies recommends a favorable report on SB 0064.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Wiener, Pharmacist". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Steve Wiener, RPh
EPIC Pharmacy Legislative Advocate
Mt. Vernon Pharmacy and Mt. Vernon Pharmacy at Fallsway