



Date: February 14, 2023

To: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair

From: Aliyah N. Horton, FASAE, CAE, Executive Director, MPhA, 240-688-7808

Cc: Senate, Finance Committee

Re: FAVORABLE - SB 398 - Health Insurance - Reimbursement and Use of Specific Pharmacies and Dispensaries - Prohibitions

The Maryland Pharmacists Association (MPhA) urges a **FAVORABLE** report of **SB 398 - Health Insurance - Reimbursement and Use of Specific Pharmacies and Dispensaries – Prohibitions**.

As far back as 1996 MPhA has had a policy advocating for patients to be able to exercise freedom of choice in pharmacy services.

The topic of specialty drugs arises every legislative session and each year the number of medications subject to specialty drug categorization rises. The drugs defined as specialty are not consistent across providers or health plans offered by the same provider. As pharmacists will testify, many of the drugs listed as “specialty” do not require any additional training or handling beyond what a standard pharmacy offers.

Steering by Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMS) leaves patients directed away from their “home” or preferred pharmacists and pharmacies toward mail-order or “delivery depots.”

Specialty drugs is a booming business and PBMs are ensuring that their affiliated pharmacies are enjoying the benefits. **In 2017, the top four specialty pharmacies were owned or co-owned by a Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM).**ⁱ

It is unfair competition as pharmacy access is restricted by entities with direct competitive and financial interests. This practice negatively impacts community pharmacies with the knowledge, skills, abilities and relationships to best meet the needs of their patients.

MPhA urges a favorable report of SB 398.

MARYLAND PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1882, MPhA is the only state-wide professional society representing all practicing pharmacists in Maryland. Our mission is to strengthen the profession of pharmacy, advocate for all Maryland pharmacists and promote excellence in pharmacy practice.

ⁱ Adam J. Fein, The Top 15 Specialty Pharmacies of 2017: PBMS and Payers Still Dominate, DRUG CHANNELS (March, 13, 2008)