

Dear Health and Government Operations Committee,

RE: Favorable testimony for SENATE BILL 372- Health Occupations – Pharmacists – Administration of Vaccines

I have spent 24 years in the profession of pharmacy starting as a pharmacy technician in Damascus MD while in high school. I completed my Doctorate of Pharmacy and MBA in 2007. I am a licensed pharmacist in MD, VA, NC and IL. I have spent the past 13 years a Walgreens Healthcare Supervisor serving urban, suburban, and rural communities across the mid-Atlantic. The last 8 years in Maryland.

During the COVID vaccine roll out Walgreens has worked closely with the Governor, Department of Health and others to ensure vaccine access with convenience to the people of Maryland.

As COVID vaccine was anticipated for children, parents reached out to their local trusted pharmacist. We had a wait list of parents wishing to schedule appointments once vaccine was approved. Our local schools were reaching out for vaccine solutions as well.

Walgreens has hosted on-site Flu then Flu+COVID vaccine clinics for several private schools in MD, in collaboration with the school nurse. Clinics we timed for the convenience of parents at drop off and pick up.

October 2022, a collaborative community group (the Director East Baltimore Community Affairs, Johns Hopkins University & Medicine in partnership with Brancati Center for the Advancement of Community Care) reached out to Walgreens to discuss how the pharmacists at Walgreens can support closing the immunization gap for families and students in Baltimore City Schools.

It was shared that children attending Baltimore City schools started school without the required vaccines because the families faced barriers to getting those vaccines. One of those barriers is access.

The solution for immediate impact on closing the immunization gap in children, was a Pharmacist on site the first day of school to provide school-required vaccines to children whose parent provided consent, being an education resources for parents and children on vaccines, and most importantly preventing illness.

As a community healthcare provider, Walgreens was ready to support this important initiative but the current requirement for written prescription from a medical provider to immunize children even though the administration of the vaccine would meet FDA recommendations was in the way.

This emergency bill permanently authorizes a licensed pharmacist to order and administer vaccinations to individuals as young as three years old. Families in Maryland have been accustomed to going to the pharmacy for vaccinations and should have a choice to continue to do that. Access to vaccines at a Pharmacy makes an impact on community health.

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