



March 12, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to express the unqualified support of the PharmaCare Network, an independent pharmacy serving rural western Maryland and the surrounding communities, for Senate Bill 786: Task Force on Access to Pharmacy Services and the Impact of Telepharmacy in Maryland.

The Pharmacare Network is an independent pharmacy composed of 7 retail pharmacies, a Long-Term Care and Home Infusion Pharmacy and Home Medical Department. We have been a pillar in our community for almost 48 years and have provided quality customer service and healthcare to our community. In desiring to help our neighboring communities provide quality healthcare, the PharmaCare Network purchased an independent pharmacy in the heart of Grantsville in rural Garrett County, Maryland in August 2013.

A year later, in July 2014, we purchased another independent pharmacy in rural Allegany County, in the town of Lonaconing. We successfully ran both pharmacies until July 2020 and October 2023, respectively. Unfortunately, due to declining populations and increasing staff costs, we had to make the painful decision to close those operations. With it, these core services are no longer available to the residents, in addition to the community losing a mainstay. Residents now had to drive several miles to the nearest pharmacy, which for many has been a hardship as many residents walked to these pharmacies due to transportation issues.

This is unfortunately, one of many stories of rural and urban communities who are faced with transportation and access issues. Telepharmacy, as is the case with health deserts, could assist in ensuring that residents get the services that they need in their local communities. By allowing pharmacists to oversee the filling of prescriptions and provide patient interaction via telephonic and digital connection, places like the Grantsville and Georges Creek Pharmacies could have remained open. Additionally, this would allow these locations to continue and expand



services, such as immunization days during the flu and pneumonia season by providing on-site pharmacists to participate in clinics at the pharmacy.

Telepharmacy can have a unique impact for rural communities. Just as the Maryland General Assembly several years ago led in providing telemedicine services to those underserved communities that desperately need it, this committee can, once again, begin the work to expand critical medical access.

In short, we believe this bill provides a pivotal first step in providing access to Maryland's patients in both rural and urban settings. For this, we respectfully request a favorable consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Keith Pirolozzi, Pharm.D
The PharmaCare Network