

Feb. 12, 2024

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Pamela G. Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD

RE: Support SB 18 - Pharmacists-Administration of Vaccinations-Expanded Authority and Reporting Requirements

Dear Chairperson Beidle and Members of the Committee:

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy appreciates the opportunity to comment on SB 18. As drafted, SB 18 expands the ability of pharmacists to provide vaccinations to patients age 5 and up who meet the specific requirements stated in the bill.

Since the approval of pharmacist-provided influenza vaccinations during the 2006 legislative session, pharmacists in Maryland have contributed to the public health of the citizens in the state by providing convenient access to vaccines. Maryland pharmacists were instrumental in administration of vaccines during H1N1, and pharmacists administered more than 270 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines nationally through September 2022. (Grabenstein J. Essential services: quantifying the contributions of America's pharmacists in COVID-19 clinical interventions. [J Am Pharm Assoc \(2003\)](#). 2022 November-December; 62(6): 1929-1945.e1. Published online 2022 Aug 18. [doi:10.1016/j.japh.2022.08.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japh.2022.08.010)).

Pursuant to HB 1040 /SB 736 Health Occupations-Pharmacists Administration of Children's Vaccines-Study and Temporary Authority, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) was asked to complete an evaluation of the ability of the health care system to provide vaccines to children, current vaccination rates for children, and the ability of the community to access vaccine administration for children (attached).

The federal PREP Act allowed for administration of pediatric vaccines during the COVID-19 emergency, and the MDH report demonstrated pharmacists administering these vaccines to children age 3 and up, resulting in these children having adequate protection against vaccine preventable diseases. The report stated there were more than 1,200 pharmacies in Maryland, greatly increasing the needed accessibility of vaccine services to families at convenient dates and times, and significantly increasing the number of available sites to receive vaccines within Maryland. With many pharmacies offering evening and weekend hours, this greatly increases accessibility for families to receive vaccine services. From July 2021 to June 2022, more than 82,000 vaccine doses were administered to children ages 3-18 in pharmacies. At the conclusion of its report, MDH "strongly recommends making permanent the authority for pharmacists to order and administer CDC recommended vaccinations to children ages 3-18," thus supporting the intent of SB 18 to expand scope of pharmacist-provided vaccines to children age 5 and up. The increased age (3 years to 5 years old) from previous proposed legislation to address concerns from prior legislative hearings.

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy is committed to supporting the education and training needs of immunizing pharmacists and has actively conducted Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)-approved certificate training to pharmacists since 2006 that meets the requirements set forth in current regulations and redefined in SB 18. In addition to providing this training to student pharmacists, several faculty members at the School provide vaccine continuing education to Maryland pharmacists on a regular basis. During these trainings, faculty members reinforce Maryland specific vaccination rules, including any stipulations of Maryland regulations, such as reinforcing the importance of well-child visits and referrals to primary care provider when needed.

Approval of SB 18 will allow pharmacists to support the efforts of pediatricians and health departments to meet the vaccination needs of children and help families meet vaccination requirements for primary and secondary schools.

We thank the members of the Senate Finance Committee for their consideration of this letter and the testimony of our colleagues in support of SB 18.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah L.J. Michel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" being the most prominent part.

Sarah L.J. Michel,
PhD Dean and
Professor