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MAYOR

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**SB0018**

February 13, 2024

**TO:** Members of the Senate Finance Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** Senate Bill 18 – Health Occupations - Pharmacists - Administration of Vaccines

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 18.

SB 18 allows pharmacists to vaccinate children between the ages of five and 18 with recommended immunizations. This bill continues a Department of Health and Human Services decision from early in the COVID-19 pandemic to allow pharmacists in all 50 states to administer the full schedule of immunizations for children of these ages. This announcement came in response to declining childhood immunization rates nationwide.<sup>i</sup> As more than 90% of the U.S. population lives within two miles of a community pharmacy, pharmacists are in an excellent position to improve pediatric vaccination rates by administering vaccines.<sup>ii</sup>

Baltimore City faces persistent challenges in achieving optimal childhood vaccination rates. Pharmacists play an important role in augmenting services offered through private doctor's offices, pediatric practices, or health department clinics – offering convenient locations, extended hours, and sometimes no need for appointments. Our statewide immunization registry, ImmuNET, is accessible by pharmacies and will provide the necessary information to doctor's offices and health department clinics on patients' vaccination history, allowing pharmacies and those clinics to work in partnership smoothly.

Allowing pharmacists to administer immunizations to children between the ages of five and 18 will improve pediatric vaccination rates and make our communities healthier. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 18.

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<sup>i</sup> KFF. (2024). Headed Back To School in 2023: A Look at Children's Routine Vaccination Trends. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/headed-back-to-school-in-2023-a-look-at-childrens-routine-vaccination-trends/>

<sup>ii</sup> "Implementation of pharmacist-administered pediatric vaccines in the United States: major barriers and potential solutions for the outpatient setting." *Pharmacy Practice*, v.17 (2) Apr-June2019 PmC6594428