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MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
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SB0018

March 21, 2024

TO: Members of the House Health & Government Operations 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 Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 18.

SB 18 allows pharmacists who meet certain requirements to vaccinate children ages three to seven with a flu vaccine, a Covid-19 vaccine, or a vaccine used in response to a public health emergency. It also authorizes those pharmacists to vaccinate children ages seven to 18 with vaccines that have been recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and approved by the US Food and Drug Administration. This bill builds on 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.ⁱ 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.ⁱⁱ

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 ages to 18 will improve pediatric vaccination rates and make our communities healthier. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 18.

ⁱ 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/>

ⁱⁱ “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