



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 21, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

### **RE: Senate Bill 18 – Health Occupations – Pharmacists – Administration of Vaccines – Letter of Support as Amended**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support as amended for Senate Bill (SB) 18 – Health Occupations – Pharmacists – Administration of Vaccines, which authorizes pharmacists to order and administer certain vaccinations to children at least three years of age, subject to certain requirements. The bill also expands the types of vaccinations pharmacists can administer to children aged seven and older and adjusts the circumstances under which pharmacists may administer them.

Pharmacists have taken on an increasingly critical role in advancing vaccination coverage, having safely administered over 12.6 million vaccinations to Maryland residents since 2020. Notably, more than 1 million of these vaccinations were provided to children under 18 years old, as reported by ImmuNet, the Maryland statewide vaccine registry.

Enabling pharmacists to administer vaccines to children can reduce various barriers faced by Maryland families, enhancing vaccination coverage among Maryland children. Given the broad geographic distribution and hours of operation of pharmacies, making vaccines available to children via pharmacists helps to promote health equity.

SB 18 proactively addresses concerns about children missing routine pediatric care by requiring pharmacists administering vaccines to children to inform parents/guardians about the importance of well-child visits with a pediatric primary care provider. Additionally, as required by HB 1040/SB 736 (2021), the Department recently submitted a report to the House Health and Government Operations Committee and the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee of the General Assembly highlighting the critical role Maryland pharmacists have played in vaccinating children. Recognizing the importance of vaccination and of the ability of Maryland pharmacists to safely and effectively administer vaccines to children, the Department strongly supports this bill as amended.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LH Scott", is enclosed within a faint, light blue outline of the state of Maryland.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary