



Date: February 21, 2025

To: The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair, Education, Energy and Environment Committee

From: Aliyah N. Horton, FASAE, CAE, Executive Director, MPhA, 240-688-7808

Cc: Members, Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

Re: **UNFAVORABLE - SB 821 – Primary and Secondary Education - Student Immunization - Temporary Admission Period**

The Maryland Pharmacists Association (MPhA) urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report on **SB 821 - Primary and Secondary Education - Student Immunization - Temporary Admission Period**.

As providers and partners in public health, pharmacists are concerned about the impact of this bill on public health.

1. Classroom Exposure Risk

The 60-day temporary admission window creates an extended period where unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students may interact with immunocompromised classmates or those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. This is particularly concerning for highly transmissible diseases like measles, where even brief exposure can lead to transmission.

2. Outbreak Response Challenges

During a disease outbreak, schools need immediate, accurate immunization records to respond effectively. The proposed 60-day window complicates rapid identification of at-risk students. This could delay crucial public health responses when time is of the essence. Current pharmacy-based immunization records provide instant verification capability.

3. Seasonal Health Considerations

Allowing delayed immunization verification during these critical periods poses unnecessary risks.

- The timing of school admission often coincides with the start of flu season
- Periods of increased respiratory illness transmission
- Peak times for certain vaccine-preventable diseases

4. Full Authorization of Pharmacists to Order and Administer Vaccinations Remains Critical

For years, pharmacists have advocated for the ability to vaccinate for ages 3 and up. While advancements have been made, the authorization remains fragmented. Pharmacies provide access and convenience for communities in Maryland through:

- extended hours including evenings and weekends
- reduced lost work time for parents
- walk-in availability eliminating scheduling barriers
- neighborhood locations that reduce transportation challenges; and
- the ability of multiple family members to be vaccinated in one visit.