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February 24, 2026

To: The Honorable Heather Bagnall, Chair
Health Committee

From: Irnise F. Williams, Deputy Director, Health Education and Advocacy Unit

Re: House Bill 0637 - Public Health - Recommendations for Immunizations,
Screenings, and Preventive Services - Pharmacist Administration and Required
Health Insurance Coverage (The Vax Act) - **SUPPORT**

The Office of the Attorney General’s Health Education and Advocacy Unit (HEAU) supports HB637. This bill decouples Maryland’s vaccine and other preventive service recommendations from potential federal changes and authorizes the Health Secretary to establish state-specific preventive service and vaccine recommendations based on scientific and medical expert guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), while also considering federal guidance. It ensures broad access to lifesaving care, requires insurance carriers to cover these services without cost-sharing, and continues pharmacists’ authority to administer evidence-based vaccines.

HB637 ensures access to essential preventive care—immunizations, screenings, and other services—grounded in sound science, while providing clarity, consistency, and stability for patients and providers. This is particularly important given recent federal changes that removed routine recommendations for several critical vaccines, including hepatitis A and B, COVID-19, rotavirus, flu, and meningococcal disease, and downgraded them to high-risk or shared decision-making categories. These changes were made without citing new data and without following the standard process of consulting the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) during a public meeting. A lawsuit filed by leading medical organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Physicians, calls these changes a “drastic overhaul” that is both harmful and unlawful.

By empowering Maryland to maintain evidence-based standards, HB637 protects public health and ensures that families continue to have science-based guidance and access to preventive

services without cost barriers. This legislation is critical to preserving access to preventive care and maintaining trust in Maryland's public health system.

We urge a favorable report on HB637.