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Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 13, 2020

**Testimony in Support of SB 440:
Pharmacists - Aid for the Cessation of Tobacco Product Use**

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Smoking is one of the leading causes of premature and preventable death in the USA. **SB 440** would authorize licensed pharmacists to prescribe and dispense medications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as tobacco cessation aids. Currently, Maryland law covers tobacco cessation medication and services offered by licensed health care practitioners with Medicaid and the Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP). **SB 440** would simply extend those same provisions to licensed pharmacists in Maryland.

Though there are over-the-counter options for smoking cessation, these options are less effective and insurance companies often do not cover the costs. Expanding the scope of practice of licensed pharmacists to include tobacco cessation counseling and prescribing of tobacco cessation aids is anticipated to increase utilization of such services by Medicaid and MCHP enrollees. This will increase the chances of getting Marylanders to quit smoking and improve their health habits. Reduced smoking rates will aid in the prevention and reduced impacts of chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, and many types of cancers.

Authorizing pharmacists to provide tobacco cessation aids is safe, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has stated that use of cessation medications is appropriate for most adult smokers. In fact, there are 12 states that have passed legislation so far that have statutes or regulations addressing pharmacist prescribing of tobacco cessation aids (without a collaborative practice agreement or local standing order): Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Missouri, New Mexico, Oregon, and West Virginia. Of those, Arkansas and Missouri allow pharmacists to prescribe nicotine replacement therapy. Other states are also in the process of considering similar legislation.

Tobacco cessation aids are proven to increase quit rates among smokers but are underutilized. **SB 440** would help ensure that tobacco cessation is more accessible and convenient to Marylanders by authorizing trained pharmacists to prescribe these aids.

I urge this body to vote favorably on SB 440.

Respectfully,



Senator Antonio L. Hayes
Chair, Baltimore City Senate Delegation
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