



February 13, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support: SB 545 - Pharmacists - Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medications (HB 656)

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the leadership of the schools of pharmacy, we urge your support for SB 545 Pharmacists Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medications. This legislation builds on the public health success of pharmacists' authority to administer vaccines. Currently, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico allow pharmacists to administer immunizations. Within this group, 46 states allow pharmacists to administer other injectable medications nuanced in some fashion. Of those, **34 states grant pharmacists authority to administer injectable medications per protocol, prescription, or standing order, without additional barriers.** This bill would allow Maryland pharmacists to administer injectable medications to patients on the valid order of a prescriber or public health official.

This bill would be of tremendous benefit to patients who suffer from serious mental illness (SMI), as well as those who receive maintenance injections for substance use disorders. Poor adherence to antipsychotics has been associated with higher risk of relapse, hospitalization frequency, and costs. In 2013, schizophrenia had a \$155.7 billion economic burden in the United States with more than 40% of patients not adherent to their medications. Bipolar disorder ranks as the eighteenth leading cause of disability, with non-adherence between 20-60%. Adherence to prescribed medications is crucial to improve outcomes.

One way to ensure treatment adherence is to use long-acting injections (LAIs) that can be administered every few weeks or months. However, for patients with SMI these medications are underutilized. Compounding this problem is that psychiatrists report they do not have the inventory or operational capacity to facilitate patient access to these expensive medications. They lack the necessary infrastructure to deal with patient assistance programs or to administer injections. Patients report transportation issues, and other requirements that limit their ability to access normal physician offices or clinic hours.

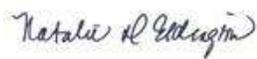
Studies show that when pharmacists are engaged in the medication use process, access, adherence, outcomes, and quality of care improves. For instance, in the nine state Albertson Pharmacies study¹, pharmacists provided long-acting injection medications for patients with SMI in community settings. Overall, patients were highly satisfied with receiving long-acting injections by pharmacists. Nearly 81% of the patients reported that receiving medications administered by a pharmacist was more suitable compared with receiving it in other health settings due to wait time for appointment, duration of appointment, location of service, and pharmacist communication and clinical skills. Moreover, 93% of the patients reported they would recommend the community pharmacist services to others. Importantly, receiving medications administered in the pharmacy is an opportunity for some patients to normalize the process, and decrease perceived stigma. These factors support the benefits of including pharmacists as part of the interprofessional team and for some patients to use pharmacists as the access point for administration of medications.

As with the immunization authority granted by the legislature over a decade ago, SB 545 also assures that pharmacists be adequately trained about the conditions for the population of patients to whom they serve. The bill also mandates pharmacist-prescriber documentation, communication, and requires the pharmacist to counsel patients to return to their providers for scheduled appointments. Both the Boards of Physicians and Nursing will aid in the establishment of regulations implementing this bill, assuring an interprofessional effort.

Considering the challenges that patients face in receiving appropriate treatment for SMI— SB 545 Pharmacists - Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medications can greatly improve treatment adherence programs.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We urge a favorable outcome.

Sincerely,



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cc: The Honorable Ronald Young

¹ Mooney EV, Hamper JG, Willis RT, Farinha TL, Ricchetti CA. Evaluating patient satisfaction with pharmacist-administered long-acting injectable antipsychotics in the community pharmacy. Am Pharm Assoc. 2018 Jul - Aug;58(4S):S24-S29.