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The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Lowe House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Support: HB 135 Pharmacists - Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medications

Dear Chairman Pendergrass and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, I urge your support for HB 135 Pharmacists Administration of Self-Administered Medications and Maintenance Injectable Medications. HB 135 builds on the public health success of pharmacists' authority to administer vaccines. Currently all 50 states allow pharmacists to administer immunizations. Within this group, **40 states allow pharmacists to administer other injectable medications nuanced in some fashion**. This bill would allow Maryland pharmacists to administer four classes of medications on a valid order of a prescriber, protocol or standing order.

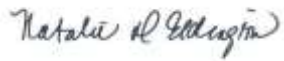
This bill is of particular benefit to patients who suffer from serious mental illness. Poor adherence to anti-psychotics has been associated with higher risk of relapse, hospitalization frequency, and costs. The economic burden of schizophrenia is estimated at \$155.7 billion annually. Over 40% of all patients are not adherent to their medications. Bipolar disorder ranks as the eighteenth leading cause of disability, with non-adherence between 20-60%. Adherence to drug therapies improves not only symptom control but also cognition and functional performance, which are associated with substantial non-health care and indirect cost savings.

One way to ensure treatment adherence is to use long-acting injections that can be administered every few weeks or months. However, for patients with serious mental illness these medications are underutilized. Psychiatrists report lack of inventory management and cash flow to facilitate patient access to these expensive medications. In addition, infrastructure constraints in these offices also hinders patients knowledge to assistance programs or nurses to administer injections. Patients report transportation issues, or the requirement to be in wrap around support programs that limit their ability to access physician offices during normal office hours.

Considering the challenges that patients face in medication adherence – HB 135 can greatly improve outcomes. HB 135 assures that pharmacists be adequately trained for the population of patients to whom they serve. The bill also mandates pharmacist-prescriber 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.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I urge your support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Natalie D. Eddington".

Natalie D. Eddington, PhD, FAAPS, FCP
Dean and Professor