

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chairman
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice-Chairwoman
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 2 West Wing
Annapolis Maryland, MD 21401

RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS OF SB62

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and committee members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) in support of Senate Bill 62. This legislation would authorize pharmacists to prescribe and dispense nicotine replacement therapy medications but we do suggest amendments to ensure these services be covered by the state's Medicaid and CHIP program.

NCPA represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 19,400 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 395 independent community pharmacies in Maryland. These Maryland pharmacies filled over 22 million prescriptions last year, impacting thousands of patients in your state. Our members are small business owners who are among America's most accessible healthcare providers and they provide an expanding set of health care services to millions of patients every day.

Over the years, the pharmacy profession has evolved from a dispensing and product reimbursement industry to a profession with the training and patient relationships to provide outcomes-based services and participate in care coordination efforts. Pharmacists' care has increasingly involved patient counseling and we have learned how their presence in underserved communities has seen improved health outcomes and reduced healthcare costs. The lack of adequate payment for these services prevent pharmacies from offering nicotine therapy products, and reduces the access to care for many patients in the state.

NCPA appreciates the opportunity to provide a letter of support for SB62 which will authorize pharmacists to prescribe and dispense nicotine replacement therapy but urge that amendments be adopted to guarantee payment for these services. If the goal is to have improve patient access, improving health outcomes and saving costs, pharmacists must be compensated for practicing at the top of their license.

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Thank you for your time and consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me at belawoe.akwakoku@ncpa.org or (703) 600-1179.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Belawoe Akwakoku". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Belawoe Akwakoku
Manager, State Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacy Association