



Committee: Health and Government Affairs Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 229

Title: Pharmacists - Administration of Maintenance Injectable Medications - Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections

Hearing Date: February 3, 2022

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 229 – Pharmacists – Administration of Maintenance Injectable Medications – Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections*. Under this bill, pharmacists may administer injectable treatments for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as authorized by a patient's provider.

Maryland has recently seen an uptick in STIs including a 12.5% increase in cases of gonorrhea from 2018 to 2019 and a 253% increase in rates of primary and secondary syphilis from 2010 to 2019.ⁱ Additionally, in 2018, Maryland ranked ninth highest in the nation for the rate of congenital syphilis (i.e., newborn contracting syphilis from parent).ⁱⁱ Because of increased resistance to oral antibiotics, the CDC recommends injectable antibiotics as the primary treatment for gonorrhea and syphilis.ⁱⁱⁱ

In order to receive these antibiotic injections, patients need to come into their provider's office, which can be an extra barrier for low-income patients or those living in rural areas. Difficulty accessing STI treatment was severe during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when many providers and clinics were closed. Because of COVID-related access issues, the CDC recommended that providers work with pharmacists to deliver STI treatment to patients.^{iv} However, these sorts of arraignments were not possible in Maryland because STI treatment is not included as one of the types of injections that pharmacists can provide.

The statute that this bill is modifying includes several important patient protections that this bill extends to pharmacy-provided STI treatment. Under the bill, pharmacists may administer injectable STI medications as authorized by a patient's provider. Additionally, a pharmacist will not administer the first dose except when specifically authorized by the prescriber.

MNA supports this bill because it improves access to needed medications for our patients. MNA also appreciates the bill's provisions regarding communications between the pharmacist, prescriber, and patient. Communication is essential to ensuring a patient's health care needs are addressed.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. If you need any additional information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net or (443) 350-1325.

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<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDPCS/CSTIP/CSTIPDocuments/Reports/STI%202019%20Annual%20Report%20Maryland.pdf>

ii Ibid

iii <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6403a1.htm>

iv <https://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/disruptionGuidance.htm>