

MARYLAND STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS

January 20, 2022

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The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB 28 - Pharmacists - Aids for the Cessation of Tobacco Product Use

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland State Advisory Council on Health and Wellness (the Council) is submitting this letter of support for House Bill 28 (HB 28) titled, "Pharmacists - Aids for the Cessation of Tobacco Product Use."

HB 28 would authorize licensed Maryland pharmacists to prescribe and dispense Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved aids for tobacco use cessation, specifically nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and would require the State Pharmacy Board to adopt regulations establishing procedures and conditions related to prescribing and dispensing tobacco cessation aids.

One of the Council's core responsibilities is to promote evidence-based strategies to prevent chronic diseases. Tobacco use contributes significantly to the risk of numerous chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and cancer.¹ Quitting smoking can both reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases and improve health outcomes for those who have already been diagnosed with a smoking-related disease.² The Council supports HB 28 as a meaningful step toward reducing tobacco use and improving the health of Maryland residents.

Nearly 80 percent of current adult smokers in Maryland plan to stop smoking, but quitting successfully often requires multiple attempts.^{3,4} When smokers have access to FDA-approved tobacco cessation aids like NRTs, they are more likely to quit for good.⁵ Barriers such as cost, availability and access to a prescribing provider can prevent smokers from utilizing evidence-based strategies to quit smoking.

Pharmacists are already well-versed in chronic disease management, and can improve health outcomes in patients with diabetes, high cholesterol, and cardiovascular and

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking and Tobacco Use: Health Effects; retrieved 5 January 2022 at <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/health_effects/index.htm>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking and Tobacco Use: Benefits of Quitting; retrieved 5 January 2022 at <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit/benefits/index.htm>

³ 2019 Maryland Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, unpublished data, retrieved 3 January 2022.

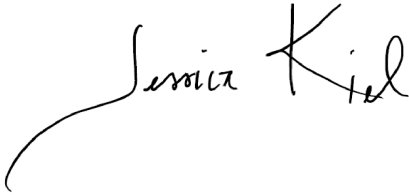
⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Smoking Cessation. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2020; retrieved 3 January 2022 at <<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-cessation-sgr-full-report.pdf>>

⁵ Ibid

respiratory diseases.⁶ Pharmacists are often more accessible to patients without appointments than physicians are, which can reduce the time and convenience barriers to accessing care.⁷ Given the link between chronic diseases and tobacco use, leveraging and training pharmacists to prescribe and dispense tobacco cessation aids such as NRTs can play a vital role in increasing tobacco cessation efforts, decreasing barriers to treatment, and improving patient health outcomes.

The Council respectfully encourages this Committee to approve HB 28 as a critical public health measure to help reduce tobacco use and improve the health of Maryland residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Kiel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Jessica Kiel, M.S., R.D., Chair, State Advisory Council on Health and Wellness

⁶ Newman TV, San-Juan-Rodriguez A, Parekh N, et al. Impact of community pharmacist-led interventions in chronic disease management on clinical, utilization, and economic outcomes: An umbrella review. *Res Social Adm Pharm.* 2020 Sep;16(9):1155-1165; retrieved 6 January 2022 at <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31959565/>>

⁷ Dent L, Harris KJ, and Noonan CW, Randomized Trial Assessing the Effectiveness of a Pharmacist Delivered Program for Smoking Cessation. *The annals of Pharmacotherapy.* 2009;43(2):194-201; retrieved 3 January 2022 at <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1345/aph.1L556>>