

Written Testimony for HB 1232/ SB 372: Health Occupations - Pharmacists - Administration of Vaccines

Good afternoon, House sponsor Lopez, Committee Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and all other esteemed Committee Members:

Do you think that a thorough, thoughtful and complete vaccine assessment for your child happens at a Supercenter with a pharmacy or at your local pharmacy? The answer is no! They only happen at your pediatrician's office!! Pharmacists do not have anywhere near the same medical information on your child, and any and all specific medical conditions or allergies that come with your child, as your pediatrician's office does! Pharmacies do not have access to this private medical information. Pediatricians are specifically trained to assess children for vaccine appropriateness and readiness.

Do you think that chaotic pharmacies are the best place for minor children to get childhood vaccines? The answer again is no!! I don't know about your local pharmacy or Supercenter with a pharmacy, but my local pharmacies always have a long line, and the pharmacists and pharmacy workers always look like they are rushing around and have been rushing around since the beginning of time, and they look exhausted! I would not want, let alone TRUST, my local pharmacist to vaccinate my children. I would want that to happen in my local pediatrician's office or my Primary Care doctor's office. Those are the people that have been treating my child since birth and know my child the best. Pharmacists will start making even more mistakes if they are giving pediatric vaccines. It is dangerous for the child and for the customers getting pharmaceuticals to have a pharmacist stop filling a prescription every time a child walks up for a shot. The best health outcomes for our children occur when the parents and the pediatrician work as a team and consider health history, prior medical conditions, precautions that should be taken, and any and all contraindications before making any medical decisions!

A few other points I would like to make are as follows:

- Children cannot be vaccinated like adults and have a very complicated schedule, sometimes receiving multiple shots at once, which is another practice I would not recommend. Children have fragile immune systems and stand more of a chance of having a catastrophic adverse reaction if more than one vaccine is given at a time.
- Immunizations are pharmaceutical products that come with warnings, precautions, and contraindications, and a list of possible adverse side effects. A child must be properly medically assessed prior to administration of any vaccine or medication to reduce the risk for serious harm and/or death. A pharmacist does not have this training. Only your pediatrician or a licensed medical doctor does.

- The Federal 1986 National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act removed liability for vaccine makers, as well as from the provider that administers the vaccines. Pharmacists have not been trained in assessment for childhood vaccines and will NOT be liable for any mistakes, leaving our children at risk for potential catastrophic adverse side effects or adverse permanent conditions.
- The bill says the child can be vaccinated in the presence of a "caregiver". It should say parent/ legal guardian.
- In the last hearing on the bill, Senator Augustine said that our pharmacies are struggling to make money and so we need this bill so they can make more money. This bill is a money maker for pharmacies. Well, I don't believe in risking any child's well being just so pharmacies can make a few more bucks!
- SIRVA (Shoulder Injury Related to Vaccine Administration) Injuries are on the rise since pharmacies started giving immunizations. A skyrocketing number of cases have been compensated by the federal government, as more people are getting their immunizations outside of the doctor's office.

We need a 3-legged stool approach for safe medical care for our children. This stool includes the physician, the parent, and the child. I will fight any bills that remove any part of this. This bill removes the physician, and I know that there are also other bills that want minor consent to be the standard , thereby removing the parent, leaving the child completely open to the greedy pharmaceutical industry.

Please think really hard before you vote on this bill. This bill would be disastrous for our children and families in Maryland!

Thank you for your time and attention. I truly appreciate it.

Trudy Tibbals

A very concerned resident and mother residing in Maryland