



**Date:** March 13, 2023

**To:** The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair

**From:** Aliyah N. Horton, CAE, Executive Director, MPhA, 240-688-7808

**Cc:** Members, Health and Government Operations Committee

**Re:** **FAVORABLE HB 1232** – Health Occupations - Pharmacists - Administration of Vaccines

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The Maryland Pharmacists Association (MPhA) urges a favorable report for **HB 1232 – Health Occupations – Pharmacists – Administration of Vaccines.**

- HB 1232 would codify the Third Amendment to the federal PREP Act into Maryland law, which authorized pharmacists to administer vaccinations to children aged three and older without a prescription and based on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Policies (ACIP) immunization schedule.
- This was done in recognition of pharmacy accessibility, history of safe administration of vaccinations in pharmacies and decreased vaccination rates among children during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been in effect since August 2020.
- Failure to pass HB 1232 will result in a decrease in expectation of healthcare access for Marylanders when the PREP Act expires.
- The PREP Act authorization improved access to vaccines since most families live near a pharmacy. MPhA recognizes that it is crucial for children to be routinely evaluated by their physicians.
- Unfortunately, 11 Maryland counties are health professional shortage areas (HPSA); another 12 have areas that are designated as HPSA.
- 40% of children in Maryland are without a “medical home.” They do not have a consistent relationship with a healthcare provider for well child visits and checkups.
- HB 1232 addresses broad public health concerns by providing more flexibility and opportunities for families to meet their medical needs and the **requirement of pharmacists to counsel on the importance of well-child visits and the need for patients to follow-up with a health care provider.**
- The requirement for pharmacists to promote well-child visits and follows-ups provides a linkage to healthcare providers and the potential for creating new patient relationships that previously were not present.
- Pharmacists/pharmacies have clear protocols in place for patient screenings to ensure vaccinations are appropriate. These protocols and training support:
  - identification and assessment of patients who are in need of service
  - mitigation of medication side effects
  - avoidance of contraindications
  - administration of vaccinations
  - provision of emergency care, if required

- Maryland law requires practitioners to report all immunizations into the ImmuNet system, so all physicians and pharmacists have access to a patient's records to eliminate duplicate administrations.

**MARYLAND PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION** - Founded in 1882, MPhA is the only state-wide professional society representing all practicing pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and student pharmacists in Maryland. Our mission is to strengthen the profession of pharmacy, advocate for all Maryland pharmacists and promote excellence in pharmacy practice.

A **FAVORABLE** report is also supported by the Maryland Pharmacy Coalition

**Full members:**

- Maryland Pharmacists Association
- American Society of Consultant Pharmacists - Maryland Chapter
- Maryland Pharmaceutical Society
- Maryland Society of Health System Pharmacists
- University of Maryland Baltimore School of Pharmacy Student Government Association
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore School of Pharmacy Student Government Association
- Notre Dame of Maryland University School of Pharmacy Student Government Association

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- Maryland Association of Chain Drug Stores
- University of Maryland Baltimore School of Pharmacy
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- Notre Dame of Maryland University School of Pharmacy