

HB1232

UNFAVORABLE

Jessica Helms

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to ask an UNFAVORABLE report on HB1232 – Health Occupations – Pharmacists Administration of Vaccines. I would like to see “caregiver” changed to “parent or legal guardian,” the need for a prescription left in, and for the ages of those concerned to not be changed from the currently standing law.

It concerns me that this bill would allow for anyone to take any child and them vaccinated for anything. While Senator Augustine, sponsor of the sister bill to this one, cited Common Law Health-Gen. § 18-4A-01 during the senate hearing, claiming that it protected the parental right to consent, he did not take into account [§ 18-4A-03. Consent to immunization if parent not reasonably available](#) Linked here: <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/2019/health-general/title-18/subtitle-4a/> . This portion of the statute leaves things very open ended and allows for anyone to take the place of the parent unless a parent has expressly stated to them that they do not have permission to do so (but how on earth would this be proven?). It puts a burden on the parent to have to expressly state to every single caregiver that they do not have this authority when it should be assumed that only the parent can take a child for vaccination anyway. By mandating that a prescription is necessary for a child to receive a vaccine with a pharmacist, we will be ensuring that a child is attending well visits and that their parents are involved with their care.

I am concerned for what will happen if parents skip well visits to get children vaccinated at the pharmacy instead. First, a four-year-old receives five vaccines at once and would need to bare both thighs and both arms to receive them all. Their screams would disrupt the atmosphere for all of the other shoppers and those waiting in line. With shoulder injuries on the rise due to pharmacists rushing this is just asking for trouble with children who fight since they aren't there willingly like an older teen or adult would be. These routine vaccinations should be done by skills nurses who are familiar with the child and the family, not a pharmacist they are just meeting.

During COVID my pediatrician's office didn't do full visits but did offer drive through vaccination when needed. Due to this, my now four-year-old is JUST being diagnosed with craniosynostosis. Had well visits been occurring as they should have it would have been caught in time to modify the situation in a non-intrusive way. Allowing pharmacists to do all childhood vaccinations without the child having attended a well visit to get a prescription is just asking for more issues like this to occur. (We have since gotten a new pediatrician who is very thorough).

I am opposed to this bill and very concerned for the health issues that may arise as parents skip out on well visits now that many have resumed normal routines since COVID, and would like to again urge that parents be put at the helm specifically, instead of a basic "caregiver."

Please oppose HB1232.

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