

May 5, 2020

The Honorable Chad Brown, Chairman
The Honorable Edmond Jordan, Vice-Chairman
House Committee on Insurance
Box 94062 (900 North 3rd Street), HCR-3
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION SUPPORT OF HB 459

Dear Representative Brown and Representative Jordan,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the National Community Pharmacists Association in support of HB 459. This legislation will provide reimbursement for healthcare services and procedures performed by pharmacists within the scope of the pharmacist's license pursuant to the Louisiana Pharmacy Practice Act, if such benefits would be ordinarily paid if the service was performed by another healthcare provider. Consequently, HB 459 will increase patient access to care, especially in rural areas and result in healthcare cost savings for all Louisianans.

NCPA represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 21,000 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 473 independent community pharmacies in Louisiana. These Louisiana pharmacies filled over 27 million prescriptions last year, impacting the lives of thousands of patients in your state.

The absence of recognition as providers by insurance companies has made it difficult for pharmacists to be reimbursed and for patients to receive the services they could furnish. HB 459 will enhance patient access to pharmacist-provided patient care services by providing benefits to pharmacists for delivered care. Ninety-one percent (91%) of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy.¹ More than any other segment of the pharmacy industry, independent community pharmacists are often located in underserved rural and urban areas. They are the most accessible healthcare providers in many communities and are critical for the provision of immunizations and other preventive care services in the community. In addition, community pharmacists are able to and are playing a vital role in COVID-19 efforts to flatten the curve; by administering COVID-19 tests, and furnishing medications and vaccine when available. Reimbursement for these services will play a critical role in combating COVID-19 and addressing other healthcare priorities statewide, and NCPA strongly supports this provision which would rightly compensate pharmacists for the services they provide.

Over the years, the pharmacy profession has evolved from a dispensing and product reimbursement based industry to a profession with the *training* and patient *relationships* to provide outcomes-based services and participate in care coordination efforts.² Utilizing pharmacists to their fullest capability provides an opportunity to table costly downstream medical interventions and will result in healthcare cost savings for all Louisianans.

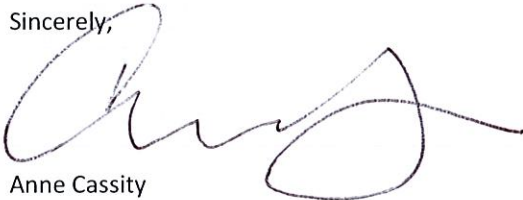
¹ NCPDP Pharmacy File, ArcGIS Census Tract File, NACDS Economics Department.

² Troy Trygstad, *Payment Reform Meets Pharmacy Practice and Education Transformation*, 78 North Carolina Med. J. 3 at 173-176 (May-June 2017), available at <http://www.ncmedicaljournal.com/content/78/3/173.full.pdf+html>.

Increased utilization of pharmacist services has improved patient outcomes and reduced overall healthcare costs. Systematic reviews have indicated positive returns on investment when evaluating broader cognitive pharmacist services as a whole, with up to \$4 in benefits expected for every \$1 invested in clinical pharmacy services.³ If the goal is increasing patient access, supporting a healthier Louisiana, and saving healthcare dollars, pharmacists must be compensated for practicing at the top of their license.

NCPA appreciates the opportunity to provide a letter of support for HB 459 which will provide reimbursement for healthcare services and procedures performed by pharmacists. Additionally, passage of HB 459 would make Louisiana one of the premier states for sustainable business models to support pharmacists practicing at the top of their profession and would help attract top candidates to jobs across the state. To increase healthcare access for Louisianans, we respectfully ask you to support HB 459. If you have any questions about the information contained in this letter or wish to discuss the issue in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me at anne.cassity@ncpa.org or (703) 838-2682.

Sincerely,



Anne Cassity
Vice President, Federal and State Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacists Association

CC: The Honorable Mary DuBisson, Kathy Edmonston, Gabe-Micheal Firment, Larry-Lawrence Frieman, Cedric Glover, M. Kyle Green Jr., Paul Hollis, Mike Huval, John R. Illg Jr., Q. Sherman Mack, Danny McCormick, Matthew Willard, Tanner Magee, Clay Schexnayder

³ Avalere. Exploring Pharmacists' Role in a Changing Healthcare Environment. May 21, 2014, available at: <https://avalere.com/insights/exploring-pharmacists-role-in-a-changing-healthcare-environment>.