

February 13, 2020

The Honorable Chris Hansen, Chairman
The Honorable Daneya Esgar, Vice-Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
200 East 14th Avenue, Room LSB A
Denver, CO 80203

RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION SUPPORT OF HB 20-1061

Dear Senator Hansen and Representative Esgar,

I am writing to you today on behalf of National Community Pharmacists Association in support of HB 20-1061. This legislation would increase patient access to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) pre-exposure (PrEP) and post-exposure (PEP) medications, and result in HIV related cost savings while combating the spread of the virus by identifying the virus early and preventing disease progression.

NCPA represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 21,700 independent community pharmacies across the United states and 125 independent community pharmacies in Colorado. These Colorado pharmacies filled over 7 million prescriptions last year, impacting the lives of thousands of patients in your state.

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 the underserved rural and urban areas and are frequently 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 proud to play a vital role in the Colorado's efforts to increase access to PrEP and PEP medications statewide. Access to pharmacy care services along with HIV PrEP and PEP medications will play a critical role in combating the HIV epidemic and staving off costly downstream medical interventions.

NCPA applauds the mandatory coverage language in HB 20-1061. Mandatory coverage provisions for pharmacist provided preventive health care services is paramount to the intended success of HB 20-1061. NCPA emphasizes that pharmacists undergo a minimum of six years of comprehensive undergraduate and professional education. Pharmacist training in clinical services, disease state management, and interpretation of lab data will be appropriately utilized and compensated for recognizing pharmacists as a competent arm in combating the HIV epidemic and bettering patient's lives in the state of Colorado.

Like other medical professions, 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 NCPA supports HB 20-1061 requiring the board of pharmacy to adopt an approved pharmacist training program for PrEP and PEP medications and services. The training program will aim to address the challenges and knowledge gaps, not limited to, counseling unique populations, recommending appropriate vaccinations, understanding HIV disease state, HIV medications along with how and when to exercise appropriate patient follow-up, refer the patient to necessary resources and healthcare providers.

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>.

Such a training program will optimize efforts in supporting all facets of the patient's experience relating to PrEP and PEP services and ensure a high standard of care in carrying out the responsibilities aligned with lowering the rates of HIV infection throughout the state.

HB 20-1061 would increase patient access to HIV PrEP and PEP medications and aid in reducing spending related to HIV care while challenging the progression of the disease. To protect Coloradans, we respectfully ask you to support HB 20-1061. 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 ademola.are@ncpanet.org or (703) 600-1179.

Sincerely,



Ademola Are
Manager, State Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacists Association

CC: The Honorable Shannon Bird, Rod Bockenfeld, James Coleman, Chris Kennedy, Tracy Kraft-Tharp, Julie McCluskie, Rod Pelton, Kim Ransom, Janice Rich, Members of the Colorado State House of Representatives