

January 27, 2022

The Honorable Joanne M. Comerford, Senate Chair
The Honorable Susan L. Moran, Senate Vice Chair
The Honorable Marjorie C. Decker, House Chair
The Honorable Brian W. Murray, House Vice Chair
Joint Committee on Public Health
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION SUPPORT OF S 2597

Dear Senators Comerford and Moran, Representatives Decker and Murray,

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Community Pharmacy Association (NCPA) in support of S 2597. This legislation allows pharmacies to obtain specific Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waivers to expand on the types of point of care testing that are provided by pharmacies. Passage of this bill will permit pharmacists to administer, read and report these test and treat the conditions which include influenza, COVID-19, and HIV PEP/PrEP therapies.

NCPA represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including owner of more than 19,400 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 169 independent community pharmacies in Massachusetts. These pharmacies filled over 9 million prescriptions last year, impacting thousands of patients in your state.

Over 90% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy¹ and more than any other segment of the pharmacy industry, independent community pharmacies are often located in underserved rural and urban areas. These pharmacies are frequently the most accessible healthcare providers in many communities and are vital in providing immunizations, testing and other services. Community pharmacists are proud to play an important part in Massachusetts' efforts to combat the COVID-19 virus, as 3 out every 4 of all COVID-19 vaccinations in the Commonwealth were administered by pharmacists or at pharmacies. This legislation will expand access to underserved populations, improve the timeliness of care and reduce the strain on hospital emergency departments for less emergent health issues.

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

NCPA appreciates the opportunity to provide a letter of support for S 2597 which authorizes pharmacists obtain CLIA waivers to expand point of care testing for COVID-19, influenza, HIV PEP/PrEP and other health conditions. Frontline independent community pharmacies continue to play an outsized role in combating the COVID-19 pandemic and remain well-positioned to play an essential role in expansion of testing and other patient care services. NCPA urges you to support this common sense legislation that promotes health equity and efficient patient care for all residents of Massachusetts.

Thank you for your time and consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me at Belawoe.akwakoku@ncpa.org or (703) 600- 1179 should have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Belawoe Akwakoku". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Belawoe Akwakoku
Manager, State Government Affairs Manager
National Community Pharmacists Association