February 15, 2022

The Honorable Jonathan Patterson
Chair, House Committee on Emerging Issues
Missouri House of Representatives
201 West Capitol Avenue, Room 305-A
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Support for House Bill 2452 – Administration of Medications by Pharmacists

Chairman Patterson and Members of the Emerging Issues Committee,

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on **House Bill 2432,** a bill that permits pharmacists to independently order and administer vaccines to individuals 7 years and older. We **support** this bill as it ensures pharmacists will be able to continue administering vaccines after their temporary federal authority to administer expires.

With over 6,000 pharmacists practicing within Missouri, passage of this bill will allow pharmacists, pharmacy personnel, and pharmacies to meet the demand for health care services and continue to be a gateway for patients to access quality care. Missourians have had expanded access to vaccines administered by pharmacists since October 2020, when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued guidance related to the HHS Declaration Under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act for Medical Countermeasures Against COVID-19. This federal guidance authorized qualified pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, acting under the supervision of a qualified pharmacist, to administer Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-authorized or FDA-licensed COVID-19 vaccines to persons ages three or older and to administer FDA-authorized or FDA-licensed Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP) recommended vaccines to persons ages three through 18 according to ACIP's standard immunization schedule.[1] As beneficial as this temporary federal authority has been in expanding access to care and relieving some of the burden on an overstressed healthcare system, it is set to expire in 2024. Approval of this bill would more closely align Missouri statute with the temporary federal authority pharmacists are currently practicing under and will expand the authority to cover adult immunizations beyond influenza and COVID-19 as well.

Over 90% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy,[2] 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 Missouri communities and are vital in the provision of immunizations, testing, and other services. This bill will not only allow pharmacies to expand their vaccination capacity but could also be an opportunity for patients without a medical home or primary care provider to be plugged into the healthcare system and to access other services they might not otherwise receive.

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[1] Guidance for PREP Act Coverage for Qualified Pharmacy Technicians and State-Authorized Pharmacy Interns for Childhood Vaccines, COVID-19 Vaccines, and COVID-19 Testing (October 20, 2020), https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/prep-act-guidance.pdf
[2] NCPDP Pharmacy File, ArcGIS Census Tract File, NACDS Economics Department.

In addition to the expansion in access to vaccinations, HB2452 importantly expands the types of services pharmacists can provide and allows pharmacists to administer medications during a public health emergency. By allowing pharmacists with a certificate of medication therapeutic plan authority to provide medication therapy services under statewide orders, more Missourians will have access to the valuable care pharmacists are trained to provide and are available through orders issued by the Department of Health and Senior Services.

NCPA and NASPA strongly support the Missouri Pharmacists Association in their advocacy for this bill. We appreciate the bill's sponsor, Representative Cook, for his attention to this important issue and urge approval from this committee.

Sincerely,

National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations
National Community Pharmacy Association