

February 28, 2023

The Honorable James J. Maroney
The Honorable Michael D’Augustino
Co-Chairman, Joint Committee on General Law
Legislative Office Building
Room 3500
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 1102 – AN ACT CONCERNING PHARMACIES AND PHARMACISTS

Co-Chairmen Maroney, D’Augustino and members of the committee:

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for **SENATE BILL 1102**, a bill expands a pharmacist’s scope of practice within testing and immunizations and expands insurance coverage to medical services. Passage of this bill permits pharmacists to administer test to treat services for certain health conditions which include influenza, COVID-19, and HIV PEP/PrEP therapies. Also, this bill allows pharmacists to vaccinate individuals over the age of 12 and mandates insurance coverage for medication administration.

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. Pharmacists are trained in providing services outside of dispensing medications like medication therapy management, managing chronic disease and performing health and wellness testing. This legislation permits pharmacists to perform tests to initiate treatment of illnesses (i.e., influenza or COVID-19 test and treat) or initiate prophylaxis for disease prevention or progression (i.e. test and treat HIV PrEP/PEP medication). Allowing pharmacists to perform these services allows them to minimize the long-term costs that can compound when a disease is not recognized and treated in time.

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

Connecticuters 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. 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 Connecticut 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. Although supportive of SB 1102, NCPA advocates for the removal of additional barriers to patient access to vaccines provided by pharmacists. This would include aligning Connecticut statute with allowances in the PREP Act for pharmacists to provide FDA-licensed ACIP-recommended vaccines to persons three years old or older.

NCPA applauds the mandatory reimbursement language in the proposed legislation. Reimbursing pharmacists for services supports patient access to pharmacists-provided primary care services. Pharmacist-provided services demonstrate improved patient outcomes and reduced overall healthcare costs. For example, previous systematic reviews indicate positive returns on investment when evaluating broader cognitive pharmacists' services and a whole, with up to \$4 in benefits expected for every \$1 invested in clinical pharmacy services.²

NCPA supports the Connecticut Pharmacists Association in their advocacy in this bill. We appreciate the General Law Committee's attention to this important issue and urge approval from the committee members.

Sincerely,



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

² 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>

