

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan Chairwoman
House Committee on Health and Human Services 82 Smith Street, House Lounge
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: Support with Edits for H5427 - An Act Relating To Businesses and Professions
–Pharmacies

Dear Chairwoman Donovan,

We appreciate the efforts that have been put into establishing new vaccine regulations for the State of Rhode Island through H5427.

Being a pharmacist in a community setting, I see the importance of making vaccines highly accessible, especially for underserved and low-income populations.

While I do believe that the provisions established in H5427 are a step in the right direction, it is with my highest recommendation that you review the current bill and establish the right for all childhood vaccines to be available for administration by pharmacists in Rhode Island as permitted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a pharmacist, I have had the privilege of administering vaccines to hundreds of children over several years when pharmacists were permitted to do so during the pandemic. It is of utmost critical importance to edit the law to allow pharmacists to continue administering all childhood vaccines. Graduating in 2020, I was permitted to vaccinate children ages 3 and up in accordance with the Prep Act, which was an opportunity I acted on in hopes to help my community. I did not require any special training to fulfill this role, as a pharmacist, I already felt very well equipped through my education and experiences. In May 2023, when the Prep Act Expired and pharmacists lost the right to vaccinate children, I felt that our community was the ones that truly suffered, as accessibility to these vaccines became much more scarce.

The responsibility to vaccinate children was just that, a responsibility. No longer having this right makes me feel that we as a profession are not being utilized to our fullest potential to help improve public health goals. Pharmacists have been comfortable and well trained to vaccinate kids since the start of the pandemic, renewing this privilege will make access to vaccines simpler for our community.

There are so many ongoing issues in regards to the accessibility of vaccines for children. We are each striving for the same common goal in regards to vaccines; to prevent the spread of disease within the population for better health outcomes. Thank you for bringing to light this important issue, as we as pharmacists are grateful for your support in improving accessibility of routine childhood vaccines for Rhode Islanders. Strengthening these policies is very important for the people of our state and I am eager to help with this cause to advocate for public health.

Sincerely,

Jordan Villella
PharmD