



CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS
MAYOR MARIA RIVERA

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February 24, 2025

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 Recommendation for H5427 - An Act Relating To Businesses and Professions – Pharmacies

Dear Chairwoman Donovan,

I support H5427, but recommend allowing pharmacists to administer childhood vaccines to children as young as 3, as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I represent the majority Latino community of Central Falls, one of the hardest-hit communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The children in my community are among the most vulnerable to the spread of illness and at the highest risk of developing vaccine-preventable diseases. It is critical for us to continue to receive access to all childhood vaccines down to age 3 from qualified pharmacists as they were permitted to do during the pandemic. I recall a time when a group of immigrant children urgently needed their routine vaccines to provide the immunization records required for the next school grade. Without these records, the children faced delays in registration and class time, which would have disrupted their household dynamics including their parents' work schedule and availability.

My office reached out to the pharmacists at Asthenis to set up a mobile clinic in Central Falls while pharmacists were still permitted to administer childhood vaccines. Asthenis utilized their pharmacists' staff to ensure these children received their vaccines in time, preventing that their education fall further behind their peers. I strongly support the recommendations to allow pharmacists to continue administering childhood vaccines down to age 3, as permitted during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that our community has meaningful access to these essential services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation. We support improving accessibility of routine childhood vaccines for Rhode Islanders and aim to work together to advance policies that can improve the healthy living of all residents.

Respectfully,

Maria Rivera
Mayor

CC: Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services