

March 5, 2025

[Submitted electronically via: HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov]

The Honorable Susan Donovan
Chair, House Committee on Health & Human Services
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 5627 – AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE – ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES

Dear Chair Donovan and Members of the Committee,

As a licensed pharmacist and subject matter expert, who is also the Dean of the College of Pharmacy at the University of Rhode Island, I am writing in strong support of House Bill H 5627 and its companion bill in the Senate. This legislation is essential in ensuring that Rhode Islanders have access to critical healthcare services provided by pharmacists by requiring insurance coverage for their expertise in direct patient care.

Pharmacists are among the most accessible and trusted healthcare professionals, yet their services remain underutilized due to reimbursement limitations. H 5627 would change that by ensuring fair compensation for pharmacists providing essential healthcare services, including but not limited to:

- **Evaluation and management of patients** – conducting comprehensive patient assessments, including history-taking, medication reconciliation, and clinical decision-making.
- **Medication therapy management (MTM)** – optimizing medication regimens to improve adherence, prevent adverse drug interactions, and enhance treatment outcomes for chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and asthma.
- **Immunization education and administration** – ensuring widespread vaccine access and education, particularly in underserved communities, which is critical in preventing influenza, COVID-19, pneumonia, and other preventable diseases.
- **Administration of medications** – enhancing access to injectable therapies for chronic conditions, such as long-acting antipsychotics, biologics, and hormonal therapies, reducing the burden on hospitals and clinics.
- **Ordering and evaluating clinical laboratory tests** – allowing pharmacists to monitor patients through cholesterol screenings, HbA1c for diabetes management, and kidney function tests for medication safety.

The Impact of H 5627:

- **Improved Patient Outcomes** – Pharmacists are highly trained to provide comprehensive medication management and preventive care. Expanding insurance coverage will help reduce hospital readmissions, adverse drug events, and emergency room visits, particularly for patients managing multiple chronic conditions.

- **Lower Healthcare Costs** – Pharmacist interventions reduce healthcare expenditures by preventing medication errors, optimizing therapy, and reducing hospital stays. According to national studies, every \$1 invested in pharmacist-led interventions saves approximately \$4 in healthcare costs.
- **Enhanced Public Health and Access** – Pharmacists play a vital role in addressing healthcare disparities by providing services in rural and underserved areas where physician shortages exist. They are critical partners in public health initiatives, including opioid stewardship, smoking cessation programs, and point-of-care testing for infectious diseases.
- **Ensuring Parity Among Healthcare Providers** – Pharmacists are already performing these essential services in collaboration with physicians, advanced practice nurses, and physician assistants, yet they lack equitable reimbursement. This bill ensures that insurance coverage applies when pharmacists deliver these services, just as it does for other providers.

Why Rhode Island Needs This Legislation Now

Rhode Island has long been a leader in progressive healthcare policies, and H 5627 is a natural step forward in recognizing pharmacists as integral members of the healthcare team. Similar legislation has been enacted in states such as Washington, Oregon, and California, where expanded reimbursement for pharmacists has proven successful in increasing access to care and improving health outcomes.

By passing H 5627, Rhode Island will:

- Strengthen its healthcare infrastructure by integrating pharmacists into the reimbursement model.
- Improve access to care for vulnerable populations.
- Drive down healthcare costs through preventive services and medication optimization.

I strongly urge the Committee to support H 5627 and its Senate companion bill to recognize pharmacists as essential providers in our healthcare system. This legislation will promote equitable access, cost savings, and better health outcomes for all Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Kerry L. LaPlante, PharmD., FCCP, FIDSA, FIDP
Dean, College of Pharmacy, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI