

13 March 2025

The Honorable Susan Donovan Chair, House Committee on Health & Human Services

State House

82 Smith Street

Providence, RI 02903

RE: (RI H5627) – AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES

Dear Chair Donovan and members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Poirier, and I am a registered pharmacist in the state of Rhode Island. I am writing this letter in strong support of the House Bill RI H5627 which would allow pharmacists to receive reimbursements for basic patient care services. Pharmacists with advanced training already offer these services as an extension of the provider pursuant to the framework of a collaborative practice agreement.

This bill is especially important in Rhode Island as we are currently facing a primary care provider shortage which limits access to patient care. In October 2024, the former Rhode Island Department of Health Director, Dr. Michael Fine, estimated that between 200,000 and 400,000 people in Rhode Island lack a primary care provider, or one-quarter to one-half of all adults in the state.¹ Dr. Fine also expects this statistic to worsen as physicians retire from practice at a faster rate than are replaced. Granting pharmacist reimbursement for relatively rudimentary yet important services (i.e., vaccinations, lab tests) would allow pharmacists to address care gaps in care and improve access to timely care. Pharmacist reimbursement of these services will permit physicians to increase panels and focus on higher acuity patients.

It is estimated that nearly half of Americans have at least one or more chronic disease conditions, which account for over 85% of total U.S. health care costs annually.² Pharmacists go through extensive education and training to be able to effectively manage medication therapy, educate patients, evaluate laboratory tests and much more, which make them a valuable resource in managing these disease states. As a pharmacist myself, I see firsthand how our role in patient care directly benefits patient outcomes and provides an alternative option for healthcare access. Through Bill RI H5627, pharmacies can continue to provide and expand on services that have been shown to improve medication adherence, thus lowering overall healthcare costs.^{3,4}

To conclude, I strongly support House Bill RI H5627.

Best regards,

Michael Poirier, PharmD, MHL

References:

1. Miller, WG. Rhode Island Faces Worsening Crisis in the Shortage of Primary Care Physicians. 2024. <https://www.ripbs.org/news-culture/health/rhode-island-faces-worsening-crisis-in-the-shortage-of-primary-care-physicians>. Accessed March 12, 2025.
2. Holman HR. The Relation of the Chronic Disease Epidemic to the Health Care Crisis. ACR Open Rheumatol. 2020 Mar; 2(3): 167–173. doi:10.1002/acr2.11114. 4.
3. Green TC, Serafinski R, Clark SA, Rich JD, Bratberg J. Physician-delegated unobserved induction with buprenorphine in pharmacies. N Engl J Med 2023;388(2):185-6. Accessed March 11, 2025.
4. White ND, Lenz TL, Skrabal MZ, Skradski JJ, Lipari L. Long-Term Outcomes of a Cardiovascular and Diabetes Risk-Reduction Program Initiated by a Self-Insured Employer. Am Health Drug Benefits. 2018;11(4):177-183. Accessed March 11, 2025.