

Steven Sepe

From: Caitlin Kennedy <ckennedy591@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 2, 2026 1:07 PM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Cc: Rep. Donovan, Susan R; Rep. Giraldo, Joshua J.; Rep. Potter, Brandon C.; Rep. Ackerman, Mia A.; Rep. Bennett, David A.; Rep. Boylan, Jennifer; Rep. Fogarty, Kathleen A.; Rep. Cotter, Megan L.; Rep. Handy, Arthur; Rep. Hopkins, Marie A.; Rep. Kislak, Rebecca M.; Rep. McGaw, Michelle E.; Rep. Place, David J.; Rep. Speakman, June; Rep. Stewart, Jennifer A.; Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph; Rep. Casimiro, Julie A.; Rep. Solomon, Joseph J. Jr.; Rep. Morales, David; Lynne Urbani; Chris Federico; Rhode Island Pharmacists Association
Subject: SUPPORT - H7934 & H7625

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Dear Chair Donovan and Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services,

I am a practicing pharmacist in primary care and population health management, and I am writing to express my strong support for House Bills H-7934 and H-7625, which together expand access to vaccinations and remove cost-sharing barriers that prevent patients from receiving recommended immunizations.

Rhode Island continues to face challenges with vaccine access, especially for children and working families who may have difficulty scheduling timely primary care appointments. At the same time, cost-sharing remains a barrier for some patients, leading to delayed or missed vaccinations despite clear public health recommendations.

H-7934 appropriately expands pharmacist authority to administer routine, scheduled, or recommended immunizations to individuals aged three to eighteen, with parental consent. This legislation builds on existing pharmacist vaccination authority and reflects how immunization services are already being safely and effectively delivered in community settings. Importantly, the bill maintains strong safeguards, including required reporting to the Department of Health, notification to primary care providers when known, and good-faith efforts to support continuity of care.

From a clinical and operational perspective, allowing pharmacists to administer all recommended vaccines to children aged three and older increases access to timely immunization, especially during peak vaccination seasons and in communities experiencing primary care workforce shortages. Pharmacies offer extended hours, walk-in availability, and geographic accessibility that complement, rather than replace, primary care services.

H-7625 further strengthens Rhode Island's immunization infrastructure by requiring coverage without cost-sharing for all vaccines recommended by the Rhode Island Department of Health. By applying this requirement across commercial insurance, nonprofit plans, health maintenance organizations, Medicaid, managed care organizations, and state employee health plans, the legislation ensures consistent, equitable access to vaccines regardless of payer type.

Eliminating cost-sharing for recommended vaccines is a vital public health strategy. Even modest out-of-pocket costs can discourage patients from receiving preventive services, especially among families managing multiple chronic conditions or facing financial constraints. Ensuring vaccines are available free of charge supports higher vaccination rates, protects vulnerable populations, and reduces the risk of preventable disease outbreaks.

Together, H-7934 and H-7625 represent a coordinated, evidence-based approach to improving vaccination access while maintaining proper oversight and integration with the broader healthcare system. These bills do not expand the scope beyond established standards but align Rhode Island law with current public health practices and national vaccination recommendations.

As a pharmacist working closely with patients across the lifespan, I regularly witness the benefits of accessible, affordable immunization services. Expanding vaccination authority and removing financial barriers will help ensure Rhode Island residents receive recommended vaccines on time, ultimately improving individual and community health outcomes.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support H-7934 and H-7625 and to advance legislation that strengthens preventive care and public health across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your leadership and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of these important bills.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Kennedy, PharmD, MHA

Warwick, RI