

Steven Sepe

From: Kenny Correia <kennycorreia1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 8:59 AM
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; Kenny Correia; Kenny Correia
Subject: SUPPORT - H7934 & H7625: Expanding Vaccine Access and Removing Financial Barriers for Rhode Islanders

Hi, my name is Dr. Kenny Correia, PharmD, BCACP, CDOE, and I am writing in strong support of bills **H7934** and **H7625**. As the Director of Pharmacy Services at Arches Medical and a past President of the Rhode Island Pharmacists Association, I urge the committee to recognize the urgency of these measures in the face of our current public health landscape.

Impact Statement: We are currently witnessing a dangerous resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases. Nationally, measles cases have reached critical levels in early 2026, with significant regional outbreaks in New England. Pertussis cases also remain at a multi-year high. As the **#1 source for immunizations nationally and in Rhode Island**—particularly following our leadership in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout—pharmacists are the essential infrastructure needed to combat these outbreaks.

Personal Testimony: The Barrier of Rigid Scheduling Beyond my professional role, I speak to you as a father of a 2-year-old and a 5-year-old. This year, my children needed their seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccines, but because these did not align with their "well-child" visit schedule, their pediatrician's office was unable to easily accommodate the request. To get them vaccinated, I was forced to take a full day off work because the office is only open during standard business hours.

In contrast, my wife and I were able to get our own vaccinations at a local pharmacy on a weekend. While H7934 is a vital step forward for my 5-year-old, the current 3+ age restriction would still leave my 2-year-old behind. **I strongly support this legislation but ask that the committee further expand the age limit to include children age 2+ (or even 1+).** Modernizing this limit would allow parents to utilize the convenience of weekend and after-hours pharmacy access for their youngest, most vulnerable children, ensuring they do not fall behind on critical series due to scheduling constraints.

Formal Testimony: The clinical and economic arguments for these bills are undeniable:

- **The Primary Source of Prevention:** Pharmacists have proven they are the most effective way to reach the population quickly. By allowing us to administer all routine or recommended immunizations to children as proposed in **H7934**, you are utilizing the only healthcare setting open 7 days a week.
- **Proven ROI:** Integrated pharmacist-led collaborative care models deliver a **Return on Investment (ROI) of up to 504%**, primarily by achieving a **23.4% reduction in hospitalizations** (Matzke et al., 2018). Funding prevention through the pharmacy is a strategic investment in the state's healthcare budget.

- **Addressing the Primary Care Crisis:** Following the closure of Anchor Medical Associates and the displacement of 25,000 patients, many Rhode Island families are without a consistent medical home. In these gaps, the neighborhood pharmacy is the only reliable point of access for life-saving vaccines.
- **Eliminating Financial Barriers: H7625** ensures these services are accessible by mandating coverage **without cost-sharing**. Removing deductibles and co-pays is the most effective way to maintain the herd immunity required to stop the spread of measles and pertussis.

By supporting H7934 and H7625—and expanding the age limit to 2+—you are backing a proven, accessible model of care that meets families where they are. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on these essential measures.

Dr. Kenny Correia, PharmD, BCACP, CDOE

Director of Pharmacy Services

Arches Medical

Cranston, RI