

1 May 2026

The Honorable Melissa Murray Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

State House - 82 Smith Street, Room 101

Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for S2856 – Expanding Pediatric Vaccine Access

Dear Chair Murray, Sponsor Lauria, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of **S2856**, which would allow pharmacists to administer all ACIP-recommended immunizations to children beginning at age three.

Federal authority already permits pharmacists to vaccinate children ages three and older, and Rhode Island has successfully implemented pharmacist-led influenza and COVID immunization for this age group without logistical or safety concerns. Expanding state law to align with existing authority is a practical step forward.

Neighboring states across New England already provide broader pediatric immunization access through pharmacies, and many states nationwide impose no age restrictions at all. This expanded access helps families receive timely vaccinations while maintaining adherence to recommended immunization schedules.

Concerns have been raised about the potential impact on well-child visits; however, recent evidence involving over 80,000 children shows no delay in timely well-child care among those who received vaccines in pharmacies. In fact, pharmacy-based immunization may serve as an additional touchpoint to identify children in need of follow-up care.

Pharmacies have demonstrated the ability to safely accommodate younger children through scheduled appointments and appropriate workflow adjustments. This approach supports public health goals while reducing unnecessary barriers for working families.

S2856 improves convenience, preserves safety, and supports prevention without disrupting the broader pediatric care model. I strongly encourage the Committee to support passage of this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Kennedy, PharmD, MHA

Warwick, RI