

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 S2888 – Expanding Tobacco Cessation Access

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

I am writing in support of **S2888**, which would allow pharmacists to initiate FDA-approved tobacco cessation therapies for patients seeking to quit.

Tobacco dependence is a chronic condition, and successful cessation often requires multiple attempts and frequent follow-up. Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to support these patients, as individuals interact with their pharmacy far more often than with primary care providers, including during evenings and weekends when other services may be inaccessible.

This authority would not replace care delivered by physicians or specialists, but rather close important gaps—particularly for high-risk patients and those who may struggle to access timely appointments. Several states in the Northeast and more than twenty states nationwide already authorize pharmacist prescribing for tobacco cessation with positive public health impact.

Pharmacists receive extensive education in tobacco cessation, motivational interviewing, and medication safety. Concerns about medication risk have been addressed by large clinical trials demonstrating the safety of FDA-approved cessation therapies, including varenicline and bupropion.

Expanding access to prescription cessation therapies also reduces cost barriers, particularly for Medicaid beneficiaries, and can lead to meaningful reductions in long-term healthcare spending while saving lives.

S2888 represents a practical, evidence-based approach to improving public health and reducing preventable disease. I respectfully urge the Committee to advance this important legislation.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Kennedy, PharmD, MHA

Warwick, RI