

[submitted electronically via: SLegislation@rilegislature.gov on 4/30/2026]

The Honorable Melissa Murray
Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services
State House - 82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

30 April 2026

**RE: SUPPORT for S2888 (Valverde) – AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS
-- PHARMACIES**

Dear Chair Murray and Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

As a pharmacist, public health advocate, and professor, I am writing to support S685 in the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services in my personal capacity. This act would authorize a licensed pharmacist who successfully completes a Board of Pharmacy-approved course on tobacco cessation therapy to prescribe and dispense tobacco cessation drug products to a qualified patient pursuant to rules adopted by the Board of Pharmacy.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated **\$300 billion each year** is spent on smoking-related illnesses, which includes **\$170 billion for direct adult medical care** and **> \$5 billion in lost productivity** from second-hand smoke.

Pharmacists are the most accessible healthcare provider and receive at least six years of education that centers on medications and how to best apply this specialized information for patient care. **Pharmacist-led smoking cessation results in ~\$2000 per life-year gained.** This value increases to **~\$14,000 for people under 35 years old.** Pharmacists are capable of simultaneously improving the health of their patients and their families, while also benefiting the economy due to gains in life expectancy and productivity after successfully quitting smoking.

Supporting this legislation would increase access to care and **decrease the public health costs** associated with smoking cigarettes. It will empower people to take advantage of an easy and safe means to obtain cessation therapies that could be fully covered by their insurance. New Mexico has had its pharmacists prescribe smoking cessation medications since 2004; since then, **at least 21 states have passed similar regulations.**

I urge you to put your full support into this bill—please vote for its passage not just to benefit pharmacists, but to increase healthcare access and benefit all people who smoke cigarettes in the state of Rhode Island.

Thank you for all of your hard work in our state's legislature!

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Bratberg, PharmD, FAPhA
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