

February 25, 2020

The Honorable Robert Ross
Chair, House Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing
Missouri House of Representatives
201 West Capitol Avenue, Room 302-1
Jefferson City, MO 65101

RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION SUPPORT OF HB 2304

Dear Chair Ross:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the National Community Pharmacists Association in support of HB 2304. This legislation would increase patient access to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) pre-exposure (PrEP) and post-exposure (PEP) medications by authorizing pharmacists to initiate and furnish these lifesaving drugs. HB 2304 would also result in HIV-related cost savings while combating the spread of the virus by identifying the virus early and preventing disease progression.

NCPA represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 21,000 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 509 independent community pharmacies in Missouri. These Missouri pharmacies filled over 30 million prescriptions last year, impacting the lives of thousands of patients in your state.

Ninety-one percent (91%) of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy.¹ More than any other segment of the pharmacy industry, independent community pharmacists are often located in underserved rural and urban areas. They are the most accessible healthcare providers in many communities and are critical for the provision of immunizations and other preventive care services in the community. In addition, community pharmacists are proud to play a vital role in Missouri's efforts to increase access to PrEP and PEP medications statewide. Access to pharmacy care services along with HIV PrEP and PEP medications will play a critical role in combating the HIV epidemic and table costly downstream medical interventions.

Like other healthcare professions, the pharmacy profession has evolved from a dispensing and product reimbursement-based industry to a profession with the *training* and patient *relationships* to provide outcomes-based services and participate in care coordination efforts.² NCPA supports HB 2304's provisions requiring pharmacists to complete an approved training program before furnishing PrEP and PEP medications and services. Pharmacists undergo a minimum of six years of comprehensive undergraduate and professional education. The training program will complement that existing education and training and ensure pharmacists are prepared to handle the unique challenges of providing PrEP and PEP services. Such a training program will optimize efforts to support all facets of the patient's experience relating to PrEP and PEP services and ensure a high standard of care and lower rates of HIV infection throughout the state.

¹ NCPDP Pharmacy File, ArcGIS Census Tract File, NACDS Economics Department.

² Troy Trygstad, *Payment Reform Meets Pharmacy Practice and Education Transformation*, 78 North Carolina Med. J. 3 at 173-176 (May-June 2017), available at <http://www.ncmedicaljournal.com/content/78/3/173.full.pdf+html>.

Although NCPA commends the bill's goal of utilizing pharmacists to fight the HIV epidemic, we are concerned that HB 2304 does not require coverage for pharmacist-provided HIV PrEP and PEP patient care services. This is contrary to similar bills introduced in Colorado, New Jersey, and Washington. Mandatory coverage provisions for pharmacist-provided preventive healthcare services would bolster the intended success of HB 2304. Payment models that preclude the participation of qualified, accessible healthcare practitioners, such as pharmacists, have the unintended consequence of limiting access to care, particularly in underserved settings. We urge you to strengthen this bill by requiring coverage for pharmacist-provided HIV PrEP and PEP services so that pharmacists can be recognized as a competent arm in combating the HIV epidemic.

HB 2304 would increase patient access to HIV PrEP and PEP medications and aid in reducing spending related to HIV care while challenging the progression of the disease. To protect Missourians, we respectfully ask you to support HB 2304. If you have any questions about the information contained in this letter or wish to discuss the issue in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me at matthew.magner@ncpa.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Magner".

Matthew Magner, JD
Director, State Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacists Association

cc: The Honorable Phil Christofanelli
Members of the House Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing