

March 3, 2025

The Honorable Assemblyperson Elaine Marzola, Chair
The Honorable Assemblyperson Sandra Jauregui, Vice Chair
Assembly Commerce and Labor Committee
Legislative Building, Room 4100
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, NV

RE: SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 186 – RELATING TO GOVERNING PHARMACISTS

Chairperson Marzola, Vice Chairperson Jauregui and members of the Commerce and Labor Committee:

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for **AB 186**, a bill that expands pharmacists' scope of practice by granting new authorities for prescribing, dispensing and laboratory testing. This legislation also requires health insurance providers and Medicaid to cover and reimburse clinical services rendered by pharmacists at a rate equal to other licensed providers for similar services. We **support** this legislation as it expands access to care for patients across Nevada, specifically for rural and underserved areas and empowers pharmacists with the state's healthcare system.

The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) represents the interest of America's community pharmacists, including owners of more than 19,400 independent community pharmacists across the United States and 83 independent community pharmacists in Nevada. These Nevada pharmacies filled over 4 million prescriptions last year, impacting thousands of patients in your state. Our members are small business owners who are among the America's most accessible healthcare providers, and they provide an expanding set of health care services to millions of patients every day.

Within the next 10 years, the U.S. could see a shortage of over 55,000 primary care physicians.¹ In Nevada there are 74 areas that are designated as health professional shortage areas.² There are thousands of pharmacists in Nevada who are ready to provide valuable healthcare services to these communities that have limited access to care.³ By realigning financial incentives and reimbursing pharmacists for their services similar to other health care professionals there will be greater access to the vital health care services pharmacists provide.

Over 90% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy⁴ and more than any other segment of the pharmacy industry, independent community pharmacies are often located in underserved rural and urban areas.

¹ Association of American Medical Colleges. 2019 UPDATE The Complexities Of Physician Supply And Demand Projections From 2017 To 2032. Available at: https://aamcblack.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/31/13/3113ee5c-a038-4c16-89af-294a69826650/2019_update_-_the_complexities_of_physician_supply_and_demand_-_projections_from_2017-2032.pdf

² Kaiser Family Foundation. Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Timeframe: as of September 30, 2019. Available at: <https://www.kff.org/other/stateindicator/primary-care-health-professional-shortage-areas/area-shpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Employment Statistics Query System. Available at: <https://data.bls.gov/oes/#/home>

⁴ NCPDP Pharmacy File, ArcGIS Census Tract File, NACDS Economics Department.

Pharmacists are trained in providing services outside of dispensing medications like medication therapy management, managing chronic disease and performing health and wellness testing. This legislation authorizes pharmacists to perform Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) – waived tests, allowing them to order and conduct laboratory tests necessary for drug therapy and patient care. Allowing pharmacists to perform these services allows them to minimize the long-term costs that can compound when a disease is not recognized and treated in time.

To the benefit of this realignment substantial published literature documents the significant improvement to patient outcomes⁵ and reduction in health care expenditures⁶ when pharmacists are more optimally leveraged. Compilation of studies have found themes in these cost savings, including “decreased total health expenditures, decreased unnecessary care (e.g., fewer hospitalizations, emergency department [ED] visits, and physician visits), and decreased societal costs (e.g., missed or nonproductive workdays).”⁶ The adoption of Assembly Bill 186 would result in Nevada joining other states, such as, Ohio, Colorado, California, and Wisconsin as national leaders in empowering the pharmacist to better provide valuable services to their communities. In states where such legislation has already been implemented, we are observing health plans, notably Medicaid Managed Care Organizations recognizing the value of the pharmacist and investing in the services they provide.

AB 186 will ensure that more patients have greater access to health care services provided by pharmacists while supporting the sustainability of local pharmacies in our communities. The adoption of this important legislation will ensure that citizens across the state of Nevada are able to receive vital health care services provided by their pharmacist.

We appreciate the bill’s sponsor, Assemblyperson Orentlicher, and the Nevada Pharmacy Alliance for championing this critical issue and urge this bill to be approved by this committee and brought to the floor for a full vote.

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 belawoe.akwakoku@ncpa.org or (703) 600-1179.

Sincerely,



Belawoe Akwakoku
Associate Director, State Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacists Association

⁵ Giberson S, Yoder S, Lee MP. Improving Patient and Health System Outcomes through Advanced Pharmacy Practice. A Report to the U.S. Surgeon General. Office of the Chief Pharmacist. U.S. Public Health Service. Dec 2011. Available at:

https://www.accp.com/docs/positions/misc/improving_patient_and_health_system_outcomes.pdf

⁶ Murphy EM, Rodis, JR, Mann HJ. Three ways to advocate for the economic value of the pharmacist in health care. Journal of the American Pharmacists Association. August 2020. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1544319120303927>

