



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

May 24, 2021

S. 4807-A Stavisky/A.6476-A Hyndman

As recently ammended

An Act to authorize pharmacists to provide immunizations that are recommended by the CDC to patients eighteen years or older.

Background. New Yorkers are used to having vaccinations for adults for flu, pneumonia, whooping cough and shingles being available in pharmacies and administered by pharmacists. Pharmacists have become an integral part of our healthcare system's efforts to achieve high rates of coverage of these vaccines in the recommended age groups. However, there are large gaps regarding which immunizations New York's residents can access from their pharmacists. The value of pharmacists providing immunizations has been dramatically reinforced by their critical role in providing vaccinations to prevent COVID-19, which is authorized currently by an Executive Order.

For the second year in a row, Governor Cuomo included a provision in proposed 2021-2022 executive budget to expand pharmacists' authority to administer all immunizations recommended for adults by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (Sections 3-4 of Part P of the Health and Mental Hygiene 2021-2022 proposed Executive Budget, (S.2507/A.3007). Although this provision was not included in the final budget, similar legislation has been proposed (S. 4807-A Stavisky/A.6476-A Hyndman). This legislation, as recently amended, would allow pharmacists to provide vaccines for human papilloma virus (the cause of cervical cancer), hepatitis A and B, measles, mumps and rubella, in addition to COVID-19.

Pharmacists have been successfully providing vaccinations in New York for more than a decade. They receive education about vaccines as part of their training to become pharmacists. Those who vaccinate in New York must also be certified as immunizers by the State Education Department. To provide immunizations, pharmacists must have a standing order, patient-specific or non-patient-specific, from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner.

Pharmacists help ensure that the patient's primary care physician receives notification that the vaccination was given and, with the patient's consent, report the immunization to the applicable immunization registry. If a patient does not have

a primary care physician, pharmacists counsel them on the importance of having one and provide a list for their area. Clearly, the public appreciates the easy access for important immunizations they receive from their pharmacists; since gaining the right to vaccinate in 2008, over 2 million vaccinations are provided to adults each year by pharmacists in New York according to the State Health Department.

Expanding access to critical immunizations is essential for keeping New Yorkers safe. Additionally, there are potential cost savings to the overall health care system from a reduction of emergency room or healthcare provider office visits due to avoidable illnesses.

Administering immunizations is not a competition between health professionals. Rather, as the current COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, it is a collaborative mission among physicians, nurses, healthcare clinics and systems, public health agencies, health insurers and pharmacists to help us achieve greater health protections for all residents of New York. Our “new normal” must incorporate more such “team approaches” to health care.

NYSPHA Recommends: At this time of great stress on the healthcare system due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to have all components of the system able to provide life-saving vaccines. We strongly urge the Legislature to pass [S. 4807-A Stavisky/A.6476 Hyndman](#) (as recently amended) this session to proactively address this public health imperative.

Direct questions to advocacy@nyspha.org

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