



April 4, 2023

[submitted electronically via: Slegislation@rilegislature.gov]

The Honorable Joshua Miller
Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
41 Talbot Manor
Cranston, RI 02905

RE: S292 (Valverde) – Pharmacists & Tobacco Cessation Therapies – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Miller, Vice Chair Valverde, Secretary Lawson and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) appreciates the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Senate Bill (S) [292](#) (Vice Chair Valverde). This bill will authorize pharmacists to prescribe and dispense tobacco cessation therapy medications.

APhA is the largest association of pharmacists in the United States advancing the entire pharmacy profession. APhA represents pharmacists in all practice settings, including community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, specialty pharmacies, community health centers, physician offices, ambulatory clinics, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and government facilities. Our members strive to improve medication use, advance patient care and enhance public health. In Rhode Island, with 1,140 licensed pharmacists and 1,520 pharmacy technicians, APhA represents the pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians that practice in numerous settings and provide care to many of your constituents. As the voice of pharmacy, APhA leads the profession and equips members for their role as the medication expert in team-based, patient-centered care. APhA inspires, innovates, and creates opportunities for members and pharmacists worldwide to optimize medication use and health for all.

We also support the submitted testimony from the Rhode Island Pharmacists Association.

The decision to quit using tobacco products is often a spontaneous one, which means that increased access to care in settings close to, and convenient for, patients is key. Nearly 90% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy, and pharmacies are often open nights and weekends when other care settings are closed. Pharmacists are often the most accessible healthcare professional, as many patients can ask for advice and counseling regarding their health and medications without the requirement of an appointment. Pharmacists are the healthcare system's medication experts and highly qualified to analyze and optimize medication regimens to lower costs and improve patient health. More importantly, pharmacists have demonstrated the ability to achieve quit rates similar to or higher than other healthcare

professionals.¹ Aligning Rhode Island pharmacists' scope of practice with their education and training by allowing them to furnish tobacco cessation therapy medications will align Rhode Island with 14 other states that have authorized pharmacist prescribing of tobacco cessation aids.²

Additionally, APhA encourages the committee to consider adding language ensuring coverage of these services by Medicaid and commercial insurers to establish practice models that incentivize pharmacist participation in providing these services to increase patients' access to care. Allowing for health plan reimbursement under the medical benefit of services provided by pharmacists ensures patients have more time with their most accessible health care professional, their pharmacist.

For these reasons, APhA supports S292 and respectfully request your "AYE" vote. If you have any questions or require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact E. Michael Murphy, PharmD, MBA, APhA Advisor for State Government Affairs by email at mmurphy@aphanet.org.

Sincerely,



Michael Baxter
Acting Head of Government Affairs
American Pharmacists Association

cc: Senator Bridget Valverde, Vice Chair
Senator Valarie J. Lawson, Secretary
Senator Alana DiMario
Senator Pamela J. Lauria
Senator Elaine J. Morgan
Senator Linda L. Ujifusa

¹ Adams AJ, Hudmon KS. Pharmacist prescriptive authority for smoking cessation medications in the United States. *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*. 2018;58(3):253-257. Available at [https://www.japha.org/article/S1544-3191\(18\)30001-3/fulltext#relatedArticles](https://www.japha.org/article/S1544-3191(18)30001-3/fulltext#relatedArticles).

² Pharmacist Prescribing: Tobacco Cessation Aids. Available at <https://naspa.us/resource/tobacco-cessation/>.