

March 22, 2022

The Honorable Tina Liebling, Chairwoman
The Honorable John Huot, Vice-Chairman
House Health and Finance Policy Committee
477 State Office Building
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
St Paul, MN 55155

RE: NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION IN SUPPORT OF HF 4008

Dear Chair Liebling, Vice Chair Huot and committee members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Community Pharmacists Association in support of **HF 4008**. This legislation requires equal health insurance coverage for pharmacists services and prohibits denial of payment for medical services when provided by a pharmacists within their scope of practice.

NCPA represents the interest of American's community pharmacists, including owners of more than 19,400 independent community pharmacies across the United States and 179 independent pharmacies in Minnesota. These Minnesota pharmacies filled over 10 million prescriptions last year, impacting the lives of thousands of patients in your state.

The absence of recognition as providers by insurance companies has made it difficult for pharmacists to be reimbursed and for patients to receive the services they could furnish. HF 4008 will enhance patient access to pharmacists-provided patient care services by providing benefits to pharmacists for delivered care. Over 90% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy¹. More than any other segment of the pharmacy industry, independent community pharmacists are often located in the most underserved rural and urban areas. They are frequently the most accessible healthcare providers in many communities and are critical for the provision of immunizations and other preventative care services in the community.

Like other medical professions, the pharmacy profession has evolved from 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 Utilizing pharmacists to their fullest capability provides an opportunity to table costly downstream medical interventions and will result in healthcare cost savings for all Minnesotans.

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/8/3/173.full.pdf+html>

Increased utilization of pharmacists services has improved patient outcomes and reduced overall healthcare costs. Systematic reviews have indicated positive returns on investment when evaluating broader cognitive pharmacist services as a whole, with up to \$4 in benefits for every \$1 invested in clinical pharmacy services.³ If the goal is increasing patient access, supporting a healthier Minnesota, and saving health care dollars, pharmacists must be compensated for practicing at the top of their licenses.

NCPA appreciates the opportunity to provide a letter of support for HF 4008 which will provide reimbursement for healthcare services and procedures performed by pharmacists. Additionally, passage of HF 4008 would make Minnesota one of the premier states for sustainable business models to support pharmacists practicing at the top of their profession and would help attract top candidates to jobs across the state.

To protect Minnesotans, we respectfully ask you to support HF 4008. 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
State Government Affairs Manager
National Community Pharmacists Association

³ Avalere. Exploring Pharmacists' Role in a Changing Healthcare Environment. May 21, 2014, available at: <https://avalere.com/insights/exploring-pharmacists-role-in-a-changing-healthcare-environment>.