



February 28, 2023

[submitted electronically via: HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov]

The Honorable Susan Donovan
Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee
2 Rego Ave.
Bristol, RI 02809

RE: H5555 (Tanzi) – Pharmacists & Tobacco Cessation Therapies – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Donovan, First Vice Chair Giraldo, Second Vice Chair Potter and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) appreciates the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on House Bill (H) [5555](#) (Representative Tanzi). 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 frequently referred to as 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 are highly qualified to analyze and optimize medication regimens to lower costs and improve 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 recognized pharmacists' ability to impact this public health issue and have authorized pharmacist prescribing of tobacco cessation aids.²

Additionally, we encourage 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 these providing these services that increase patient 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, we support H5555 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,



E. Michael Murphy, PharmD, MBA
Advisor for State Government Affairs
American Pharmacists Association

cc: Representative Joshua J. Giraldo, First Vice Chair
Representative Brandon C. Potter, Second Vice Chair
Representative Mia A. Ackerman
Representative Samuel A. Azzinaro
Representative David A. Bennett
Representative Megan L. Cotter
Representative Barbara Ann Fenton-Fung
Representative Kathleen A. Fogarty
Representative Arthur Handy
Representative Rebecca M. Kislak
Representative Michelle E. McGaw
Representative David J. Place
Representative June Speakman
Representative Jennifer A. Stewart

Michael Baxter, APhA Acting Head of Government Affairs

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/>.