

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Gerald Ortiz y Pino, Chair
The Honorable Candace Gould, Ranking
Member
Senate Public Affairs Committee
490 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87501

The Honorable John Arthur Smith, Chair
The Honorable Steven P. Neville, Ranking
Member
Senate Finance Committee
490 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Chairman Ortiz y Pino and Ranking Member Gould and Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neville:

We ask you to support H.B. 42, Pharmaceutical Services Reimbursement Parity. This legislation would require reimbursement of patient-care services provided by appropriately certified pharmacists. Improving patient access to care in rural and frontier communities requires reimbursement for services provided by pharmacists, who may be the only accessible healthcare provider in some communities.

The pharmacist clinician certification, established by the 1993 Pharmacist Prescriptive Authority Act (PPAA), permits licensed pharmacists to collaborate with physicians to provide certain primary care and specialty care services. This includes performing physical exams, ordering lab tests, and prescribing appropriate medications.

Although pharmacists have had the ability to register as a pharmacist clinician in New Mexico, the lack of reimbursement by insurance companies has made it difficult for patients to receive the services they could provide. Without sustainable reimbursement, there is no financial incentive for the healthcare systems and clinics to invest in pharmacist clinicians for improving access to care.

H.B. 42 creates the opportunity for clinics, healthcare systems, and community pharmacies to improve patient access to primary care, including in rural and frontier communities that lack access to other healthcare providers. According to the New Mexico Health Care Workforce Committee 2019 Annual Report, 34 percent of New Mexico's residents reside in rural or frontier counties, most of which do not meet the national benchmark for providers needed to serve their population.¹ Payment models that preclude participation from healthcare practitioners, such as pharmacists, who are qualified to provide care have the unintended consequence of limiting access to care, often in rural and frontier settings. Reimbursing pharmacist clinicians for services would support patient access to pharmacist-provided primary care services, including those in rural and frontier communities.

Thank you for considering this important legislation to leverage pharmacist clinicians to better meet the needs of New Mexico's patients in rural and frontier communities.

Sincerely,



Stacey Cox
Executive Director
National Center for Frontier Communities



Tom Kraus
Vice President, Government Relations
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

¹ See, https://www.nmhanet.org/files/NMHCFW_2019Report_FINAL.pdf

cc: Senator Jeff Steinborn, Senate Public Affairs
Senator Craig W. Brandt, Senate Public Affairs
Senator Stuart Ingle, Senate Public Affairs
Senator Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, Senate Public Affairs
Senator Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics, Senate Public Affairs
Senator George K. Munoz, Senate Finance Committee
Senator William F. Burt, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Pete Campos, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Jacob R. Candelaria, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Gay G. Kernan, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Nancy Rodriguez, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Sander Rue, Senate Finance Committee
Senator John M. Sapien, Senate Finance Committee
Senator James P. White, Senate Finance Committee
New Mexico Pharmacists Association
New Mexico Society of Health-System Pharmacists