



# Maine PHARMACY ASSOCIATION

PO Box 7033    Ocean Park    Maine    04063

February 19, 2013

Dear Senator Patrick, Representative Herbig and members of the LCRED Committee,

On behalf of the Maine Pharmacy Association, I am writing in support of LD 148: An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Drugs and Vaccines Administered by Pharmacists. This bill would allow a pharmacist to administer vaccines recommended by the CDC to a person nine years of age or older according to a valid prescription from the patient's primary care physician/provider. This bill would also allow a licensed pharmacy intern to administer vaccines under the direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist who is certified for the administration of vaccines.

Child and adult immunizations are some of the most cost-effective preventive health measures. Maine's declining child and adolescent immunization rates follow a national trend and are putting people at risk for vaccine preventable diseases such as pertussis. The Department of Health and Human Services 2011 National Immunization Survey estimated that 69.2% of adolescents in Maine received at least one Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccination. By comparison, 95.0% of adolescents in New Hampshire received at least one Tdap vaccination in 2011. Maine ranks last in New England and 39<sup>th</sup> nationally in Tdap vaccination coverage among adolescents. Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, has made a comeback in Maine partly due to inadequate vaccinations. According to the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Report from the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, a total of 205 cases of pertussis in Maine were reported in 2011 compared to only 53 cases in 2010. The majority of these cases occurred among children and adolescents.

Since 2009, Pharmacists in Maine have safely and appropriately administered influenza vaccine to patients nine years of age or older and other CDC recommended vaccines to adults. Currently, 650 pharmacists in Maine are licensed to administer vaccines. Pharmacists who are certified to administer vaccines are accessible in every county in Maine including 14 pharmacists in Franklin, 21 in Hancock and 26 in Aroostook. Lowering the age to nine years for pharmacist administration of all CDC recommended vaccines according to a valid prescription would enhance access to preventive health services and improve vaccination rates.

Pharmacy students are also trained to administer vaccines in the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum. According to the American Pharmacists Association, 34 US states and territories allow pharmacy interns to administer vaccines. Allowing a licensed pharmacy intern to administer vaccines under the direct supervision of a pharmacist is essential in order to produce graduates with the experience and skills necessary to promote public health and provide immunization services. For these reasons, I ask for your support of LD 148 and a strong 'ought to pass' from the committee.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken McCall", is written over a horizontal line.

Kenneth L. McCall III, BSP Pharm, PharmD  
President | Maine Pharmacy Association