



February 11, 2019

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT H.B. 409 – Drugs and Devices – Electronic Prescriptions – Requirements

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

The Pharmaceutical Care Management Association is the national association representing America's pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). PBMs administer prescription drug plans and operate mail-order and specialty pharmacies for more than 266 million Americans with health coverage through Fortune 500 companies, health insurers, labor unions, Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs.

PCMA and its member companies are supportive of e-prescribing efforts that promote a safe, efficient, and cost-effective means for Marylanders to access their medications. In 2017, 98 percent of pharmacies and 69 percent of prescribers utilized e-prescribing.¹ E-prescribing can improve a patient's experience by encouraging discussions with their physician about the most effective prescription, discussing lower-cost generic alternatives, and having prescriptions sent to desired pharmacies with the click of a button. In addition, because the prescription is handled electronically, e-prescribing virtually eliminates medication errors associated with illegible handwriting.

Enacting an e-prescribing mandate will advance the quality of health care delivered in Maryland by not only reducing costs and medication errors, but by increasing the usage of other important tools, such as real-time prescription benefit checks and e-prior authorizations that are oftentimes embedded in the same electronic health record (EHR) platforms. Real-time prescription benefit programs deliver patient-specific drug benefit and cost information directly from PBMs to the prescriber at the point of care, even providing therapeutic alternatives that are covered under a patient's health insurance benefit. E-prior authorization also integrates directly with EHRs, enabling prescribers to easily obtain prior authorizations in real time at the point of care, saving time and money.

We applaud Delegate Barron's efforts to improve patient care in Maryland, and we urge Members of the Committee to vote in favor of this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Scott Woods".

R. Scott Woods
Senior Director, State Affairs
Pharmaceutical Care Management Association

¹ SureScripts. "2017 National Progress Report," available at: https://surescripts.com/docs/default-source/national-progress-reports/2151_npr_2017_finalB.pdf.