

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov

February 24, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill 5353 titled AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PHARMACIES {LC768/1}.

Dear Chairperson Donovan and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Jo-Anne Henry, and I am a Post-Graduate Year 1 (PGY1) Pharmacy Resident at Rhode Island Hospital. Prior to my role as a PGY1 resident, I attended the University of Rhode Island for pharmacy school and then worked as a pharmacist in the inpatient pharmacy at Rhode Island Hospital for one year until I began residency in July of 2024. As a pharmacist, I am passionate about the expansion of my role as a healthcare provider, and as a native Rhode Islander, I am excited to witness the true impact a pharmacist can make on patient care in my home state. Medicine is advancing rapidly, and the clinical expertise and judgement of a pharmacist is vital. A Tech Check Tech (TCT) system could make a transformative difference that would provide pharmacists the time and capacity to allow for their actively expanding practice.

Pharmacists undergo extensive training, including six years of a combination of didactic learning and clinical rotations. My education has provided me with an in-depth understanding of the pathophysiologic processes of complex disease states, the intricacies of the pharmacologic agents used to treat these diseases, and how to do so appropriately and safely. Additionally, pharmacists have the opportunity to complete one to two years of post-graduate training through residency.

You will notice in my personal timeline stated above, I worked as an inpatient pharmacist prior to starting residency. I decided to pursue residency because I wanted to make a larger impact on patient care. I worked countless shifts performing product verification where I felt the clinical knowledge and skills I gained throughout pharmacy school were not being utilized. The skill set of a pharmacist goes far beyond checking product accuracy - our clinical knowledge enables us to interpret lab results, identify medication-related problems, and collaborate with multidisciplinary teams to provide the highest level of patient care. It is truly a disservice to our patients to take a pharmacist away from higher-level clinical decision-making tasks in order to fulfill the tasks our qualified pharmacy technicians could perform.

During my time working in the inpatient pharmacy at Rhode Island Hospital, when performing product verification, I would scan the list of medications that needed to be loaded into the medication dispensing cabinets and then scan the barcodes on the products. The system will then tell me if and which products do not match. Clinical knowledge is not necessary to verify if the medication on a sheet matches the medication picked. After this verification process, the products are then scanned again once they are loaded into the medication dispensing cabinets and scanned again prior to administering to a patient, to ensure accuracy. There are numerous check systems in place that prevent incorrect products being administered to patients.

Contrary to the misconception that TCT may take away from the role of pharmacists, I believe it would strengthen it. By shifting some of the routine product verification tasks to technicians,

pharmacists can engage more deeply in clinical roles. I am fortunate to work at an institution that continuously works expand the role of the pharmacist so that we can all work to the top of our license. Some examples of this are through our pharmacy to dose warfarin and vancomycin policies in which pharmacists are solely responsible for interpreting lab results, performing drug interaction screens, and completing necessary pharmacokinetic dosing calculations to ensure patients receive safe and appropriate doses of these medications. To accommodate for the expanding role of the pharmacist, a TCT system would be essential to not reduce the significance of the pharmacist, but instead to leverage technology to enhance our expertise and maximize our contributions.

In conclusion, I recommend the adoption of a TCT product verification system. It represents a forward-thinking solution that benefits both the efficiency of the pharmacy department and the quality of patient care.

I support House Bill 5353, titled AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PHARMACIES {LC768/1} and I urge you to vote in favor of Bill 5353.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak in favor of Bill 5353. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jo-Anne Henry, PharmD

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