



Senate Finance Committee

February 10, 2026

Senate Bill 385 – *Public Health – Recommendations for Immunizations, Screenings, and Preventive Services – Pharmacist Administration and Required Health Insurance Coverage (The Vax Act)*

POSITION: SUPPORT

On behalf of MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, we submit this letter of support for Senate Bill 385.

Current Maryland law ties insurance coverage requirements and pharmacist vaccine administration authority to federal recommendations. Historically, states have relied on these federal processes because they were transparent, science-driven, and informed by independent medical expertise. Yet recent shifts in federal processes have raised concerns about whether those processes continue to meet the high scientific and procedural standards necessary to protect public health. Vaccines remain one of the most powerful and effective public health tools available to prevent severe illness, disability, and death across the lifespan. Every Marylander deserves access to recommended vaccines, preventive services, and clear, evidence-based medical guidance grounded in rigorous science.

Maryland has historically maintained high vaccination coverage, with statewide vaccination rates for school-age children near or above national targets. For example, the Maryland Department of Health's Annual Report of Immunization Status for the 2024–2025 school year reports that statewide kindergarten MMR vaccination coverage was 96.42%, exceeding the 95% threshold generally considered necessary to prevent outbreaks of highly contagious diseases, such as measles.

Senate Bill 385 provides a critical safeguard for Maryland patients by authorizing the Maryland Secretary of Health to take into consideration recommendations from trusted, independent medical authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). These organizations represent frontline clinicians who care for infants, children, adolescents, adults, pregnant and postpartum patients, and families every day, and whose guidance is developed through rigorous, evidence-based review. This bill ensures that Maryland can continue to support robust vaccine, screening, and preventive care recommendations, even in times of shifting federal guidance.

Importantly, Senate Bill 385 also ensures that recommended vaccines, screenings, and preventive services remain covered by insurance without cost-sharing, preserving equitable access and preventing financial barriers to care. This approach protects continuity, stability, and trust in Maryland's preventive health system while prioritizing science, patient safety, and public health. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

For more information call:

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