



February 21, 2025

[submitted electronically via: [dannyverdin@scsenate.gov](mailto:dannyverdin@scsenate.gov)]

The Honorable Daniel B. "Danny" Verdin III  
Chairman  
Senate Medical Affairs Committee  
412 Gressette Bldg.  
Columbia 29201

### **South Carolina Senate Bill 54 – OPPOSE**

Chairman Verdin and members of the Senate Medical Affairs Committee:

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) respectfully writes to oppose [Senate Bill \(S.\) 54](#), which will unnecessarily increase healthcare expenditures and undermine the role of the pharmacist, which is a key patient safety measure in South Carolina's health care delivery system.

One of the key roles of the pharmacist as an interprofessional healthcare team member is to ensure their patients' safe and effective use of medications. Pharmacists do this through steps in the medication dispensing process, such as prospective drug utilization review, where the pharmacist evaluates the appropriateness of a medication for an individual patient before the medication is dispensed. Pharmacists rely on their knowledge, experience, judgment, and ongoing reviews of high-quality, evidence-based, peer-reviewed published literature to confirm the appropriate medication use for a specific indication. They check for the safe and effective dose of medication for a specific patient. This is especially important for patients with allergies, kidney disease, liver disease, or other past medical histories that may change a medicine's safe or effective dose. Pharmacists review a medicine's interactions with other drugs, disease states, foods, or interactions with other items. This is completed under the pharmacist's state scope of practice and within their professional judgment. It is formed through six to eight years of collegiate and doctoral-level training, including over 1,700 hours of hands-on experiential education in patient care settings.

In addition to the medication expertise pharmacists contribute during the dispensing process, pharmacists also provide numerous patient care services to their patients to optimize the safe and effective use of medications, increase access to acute and preventative care, and work collaboratively with other members of the healthcare team to assist patients in reaching their therapeutic goals.

The result of pharmacists using their professional judgment and providing the care they were trained to provide is patients reaching their therapeutic goals, cost savings in health care expenditures, and

preventing thousands of potentially fatal medication errors each year. For example, a study found that pharmacists at one community pharmacy made around 17,000 clinical interventions in a year, resulting in \$2.4 million in cost savings and the prevention of numerous medication errors for their patients.<sup>1</sup> Extensive published literature has also proven that patients are healthier when pharmacists are involved in their care,<sup>2</sup> with a \$9.64 return on investment for every \$1 when pharmacists are paid for providing various patient care services.<sup>3</sup>

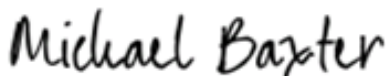
**S. 54 undermines the pharmacist's role by placing arbitrary restrictions on when a pharmacist may utilize their professional judgment to ensure the safe and effective delivery of medications to patients. This removes the pharmacist as the last line of defense to ensure that patient safety concerns associated with medications are addressed.** As you know, rules adopted by the South Carolina Board of Pharmacy<sup>4</sup> allow pharmacists to use their professional judgment to determine whether to fill a prescription for medical reasons.

**S. 54 also inserts the state into the practice of pharmacy.** Restricting when pharmacists may utilize their professional judgment, which is informed by their years of doctoral education, inserts the state into the practice of pharmacy **governed by the South Carolina Board of Pharmacy.**

These actions will undoubtedly increase risks to patient safety and further elevate already high health care expenditures for our patients in South Carolina needing additional care, such as hospitalizations and emergency department visits.

For these reasons, we strongly oppose S. 54 and respectfully request your "NAH" vote. If you have any questions or require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact E. Michael Murphy, PharmD, MBA, APhA Senior Advisor for State Government Affairs, by email at [mmurphy@aphanet.org](mailto:mmurphy@aphanet.org).

Sincerely,



Michael Baxter  
Vice President, Government Affairs

cc: Senator Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.  
Senator Brad Hutto  
Senator Shane R. Martin  
Senator Thomas C. Alexander  
Senator Tom Davis

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<sup>1</sup> Pharmacy Saves Payer \$2.4 Million by Making Clinical Interventions a Priority. *Pharmacy Times*. Available at <https://www.pharmacytimes.com/view/pharmacy-saves-payer-24-million-by-making-clinical-interventions-a-priority>

<sup>2</sup> Giberson S, et al. Improving Patient and Health System Outcomes through Advanced Pharmacy Practice. *A Report to the U.S. Surgeon General*. Available at <https://jcpr.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Improving-Patient-and-Health-System-Outcomes-through-Advanced-Pharmacy-Practice.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> White ND, Lenz TL, Skrabal MZ, Skradski JJ, Lipari L. Long-Term Outcomes of a Cardiovascular and Diabetes Risk Reduction Program Initiated by a Self-Insured Employer. *Am Health Drug Benefits*. 2018;11(4):177-183.

<sup>4</sup> <https://llr.sc.gov/bop/laws.aspx>

Senator Thomas D. "Tom" Corbin  
Senator Margie Bright Matthews  
Senator Michael W. Gambrell  
Senator Richard J. Cash  
Senator Billy Garrett  
Senator Ronnie A. Sabb  
Senator Deon T. Tedder  
Senator Josh Kimbrell  
Senator Tom Fernandez  
Senator Matthew W. "Matt" Leber  
Senator Jeff Zell  
Brian Clark, Chief Executive Officer, South Carolina Pharmacy Association

**About APhA:** APhA is the largest association of pharmacists in the United States advancing the entire pharmacy profession. APhA represents pharmacists in all practice settings, including community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, specialty pharmacies, community health centers, physician offices, ambulatory clinics, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and government facilities. Our members strive to improve medication use, advance patient care, and enhance public health. **In South Carolina, with 5,420 licensed pharmacists and 7,720 pharmacy technicians, APhA represents pharmacists, students, and pharmacy technicians that practice in numerous settings and provide care to many of your constituents.** As the voice of pharmacy, APhA leads the profession and equips members for their role as the medication expert in team-based, patient-centered care. APhA inspires, innovates, and creates opportunities for members and pharmacists worldwide to optimize medication use and health for all.