

**Written Testimony of Maria Summa, PharmD of Farmington, Connecticut  
Connecticut General Assembly Public Health Committee  
March 16, 2012**

Testimony in Support of:

**SB 371, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF INJECTABLE VACCINES TO ADULTS IN  
PHARMACIES**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Maria Summa and I write in strong support of SB 371, An Act Concerning the Administration of Injectable Vaccines to Adults in Pharmacies, which would expand the types of vaccines which pharmacists may administer to adults.

I have been a practicing pharmacist in the State of Connecticut for 18 years. I serve as an Associate Professor at the Saint Joseph College School of Pharmacy and I previously served as the Director of Pharmacy at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center. In 2009, I became a certified pharmacist immunizer, largely to assist my community in identifying and screening patients and administering vaccines during the nationwide H1N1 pandemic. I continue to ardently advocate for strategies that increase vaccination rates by educating potential vaccine recipients, working to expand vaccine accessibility, and partnering with other healthcare providers and community leaders who are involved in immunization awareness efforts.

Few preventative healthcare initiatives have been as successful as immunization programs. Vaccination campaigns have almost eliminated vaccine-preventable diseases that were once common in our country.<sup>1</sup> Despite this success, nearly 50,000 U.S. adults die annually from vaccine-preventable diseases or their complications.<sup>2</sup> Influenza and pneumonia remain the eighth leading cause of death,<sup>3</sup> and other vaccine-preventable diseases, such as hepatitis B and pertussis, are major causes of disease. Hepatitis B vaccination was recently added as a vaccine series recommended for unvaccinated adults aged 19 – 59 years with diabetes mellitus, adding to the target patient groups previously identified by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).<sup>4</sup> In 2010, over 21,000 cases of pertussis were reported in the United States, and represents a number more than double the cases reported only 2 years earlier.<sup>5</sup> Adults who were immunized against pertussis as children have likely lost their immunity, and now require booster doses to both improve protection against future illness *and* to reduce the risk of disease transmission to infants less than 6 months of age who are not yet candidates for the vaccine. Despite the availability of the Tdap (tetanus and diphtheria toxoids and acellular pertussis) vaccine since 2005, only 16 percent of health care workers and only 6 percent of U.S. adults have received this vaccine.<sup>6</sup>

Pharmacists have been instrumental in increasing vaccination rates in their communities.<sup>7</sup> Pharmacists are able to help address vaccination rate shortfalls because pharmacists in all settings have access to patients in need of vaccinations. Pharmacists in Connecticut remain limited in their ability to increase vaccination rates by laws that restrict the types of vaccines permitted for administration. SB 371 would expand the types of vaccines which pharmacists may administer to adults, and address this ongoing public health need. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony and for raising this important issue. I urge support of this bill.

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