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February 10, 2026

Senator Bailey, Chair  
Representative Mathieson, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 2071 — *An Act to Expand Access to Vaccines Approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration by Allowing Pharmacists to Prescribe, Dispense and Administer Vaccines and Require Insurance Coverage*

Senator Bailey Representative Mathieson and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of the sponsor's published amendment to LD 2071, *An Act to Expand Access to Vaccines Approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration by Allowing Pharmacists to Prescribe, Dispense and Administer Vaccines and Require Insurance Coverage*.

The Maine Immunization Program, Maine CDC, and the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) are committed to providing clear, accurate, science-based guidance and access for people in Maine to immunizations so that they can make informed, self-determined decisions about their health with respect to vaccine-preventable illnesses.

LD 2071 seeks to expand vaccine access in pharmacies by allowing pharmacists to prescribe, dispense or administer vaccines to a person 18 years of age or older, or a person over 6 months specifically for influenza and COVID 19 vaccines, and to dispense or administer other vaccines with a prescription to a person 3 years of age or older. LD 2071 also seeks to replace the longstanding vaccine recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices with those of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AFP) or the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) or their successor organizations.

Beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic, Maine has increasingly relied on our pharmacy partners to reduce the spread of respiratory disease through timely and low-barrier access to immunization. More pharmacies than ever are offering vaccination services, increasing the number of providers and access points for patients throughout the State. Not only are pharmacies plentiful in all types of urban and rural areas, but they also offer the convenience of extended hours. For patients, no appointments are necessary and there are no out-of-pocket costs associated with the doctor's visit. Over the last several years we have seen the rates of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines in pharmacies remain high, an average of 40percent of the overall doses given in Maine. Additionally, with a valid prescription, they continue to vaccinate for all other

recommended vaccines. Maine pharmacies have proven they are reliable and efficient at providing these services.

The success of the Maine Universal Childhood Immunization Program has maintained access and equity for all Maine children for the past 15 years, resulting in sustained high rates of routine childhood vaccines for this population. Influenza and COVID-19 vaccines are an exception. We have seen a decline in respiratory disease preventing vaccines of the past two years. Not all providers carry COVID-19 vaccine, some do not offer vaccine-only appointments, and waiting for the next available appointment leaves a child susceptible to disease. For adults, rates of vaccination coverage vary by condition, but generally remain much lower than those of children. Because of this, we support the changes to that allow pharmacists to prescribe, dispense or administer vaccines to most people. Removing the barrier of prescriptions for individuals 18 years of age and older will afford adults with readily available access, reducing disease burden.

As the Committee may be aware, on January 5, 2026, the Acting Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention signed a [decision memorandum](#) to revise the Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule and significantly reduce the number of vaccinations routinely recommended for all U.S. children. This decision did not follow established procedure for vaccine policy recommendations and threatens an increase in vaccine-preventable diseases in children nationwide. AAP and AFP have issued their own immunization schedules and ACOG has released clinical guidance, all breaking from the ACIP, due to concerns that federal officials have undermined the rigorous, scientific, and transparent process of developing vaccine recommendations. Maine CDC is aligned with these organizations and notified Maine clinicians on January 7, 2026 of the recommendation to follow the pediatric immunization guidance issued by the AAP. Because of this, we support the language changes with regard to vaccine recommendations.

In conclusion, Maine CDC recognizes the need to ensure Maine people continue to receive vaccines based on factual, scientific, evidence-based recommendation. Federal actions and turmoil make the future decisions of the U.S. CDC ACIP uncertain. The Department supports the immediate actions of this committee necessary to maintain existing immunization recommendations, while expanding access for both pediatric respiratory disease vaccines and all vaccines for adults.

Sincerely,



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Director

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Maine Department of Health and Human Services