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**House Human Services Committee
Representative Robin Weisz - Chairman
SB 2279
3-9-2021**

Chairman Weisz and members of the committee, for the record my name is Mike Schwab, Executive Vice President of the North Dakota Pharmacists Association. We are here today in support of SB 2279 – allowing pharmacists to delegate drug administration to pharmacy technicians.

If I can turn your attention to page 1 – lines 8-9 and lines 11-13.

This bill is straight forward and short. Currently, pharmacists do not have the authority under current law, to delegate the administration of a drug (such as an influenza vaccine) to a pharmacy technician. By adding the language, you see on lines 11-13, pharmacists potentially could have the ability to delegate medication administration to a pharmacy technician if the Board of Pharmacy elects to adopt rules to allow such.

During the pandemic, federal executive orders have allowed pharmacy technicians to administer COVID vaccines when under the direct supervision of a pharmacist. We have already seen over 120 pharmacy technicians in North Dakota complete the additional required training and requirements outlined in the federal executive order. Allowing pharmacy technicians to administer medications is not completely new. Prior to the pandemic, according to our National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations, 5 states had already allowed pharmacy technicians to administer medications with more proposing to do so this year.

You might ask why we are asking for this law to change. Fair question. First, the obvious reason is due to the COVID pandemic and the large role local pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are playing in providing COVID vaccines to the public. In some cases, pharmacists are providing 300+

vaccines in a day. Another reason is to help meet the rural professional shortage demands that exist in North Dakota. In addition, long before the pandemic, our pharmacist members from all practice settings have asked us to explore this change to help in providing mass immunization clinics, worksite immunization clinics and to help fill potential gaps in various healthcare settings and communities if/when needed. This type of service would only be provided to individuals or groups of individuals with stable and predictable conditions which could be identified in greater detail by the Board of Pharmacy through the rule making process, if they elect to act upon this legislation if passed.

You might also ask what type of education requirements are in place to practice as a pharmacy technician in North Dakota. For background, North Dakota was one of the first states (if not the first) to require pharmacy technicians complete an American Society of Health Systems Pharmacists Accredited Academic Program (typically a two-year accredited degree program). All pharmacy technicians also need to pass a nationally recognized certification exam through either the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board or the National Health Career Association. In addition, all pharmacy technicians need to register with the ND Board of Pharmacy to practice in North Dakota. On an annual basis, pharmacy technicians are also required to complete ten hours of continuing education.

As I briefly mentioned earlier, allowing healthcare providers to delegate medication administration duties is not new. A fair or reasonable comparison might be a nurse's ability to delegate medication administration to a medical assistant. My understanding is that authorization is in the North Dakota Century Code and regulated by the Board of Nursing. I am not an expert in this area, but I believe this to be the case from my research.



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The fact that North Dakota lead the country in terms of implementing high standards and requirements for pharmacy technicians, there is no doubt we will continue to maintain those high standards and requirements if this legislation passes, and rules are adopted.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to try and answer any questions you might have for me. Thanks for your time and attention today.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike' in a cursive, flowing script.

Mike Schwab
EVP - NDPhA