



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

TREATING OUR FAMILY AND YOURS



February 14, 2017

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chairwoman
Maryland State House Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Maryland Association of Osteopathic Physicians (MAOP) are writing in opposition to HB 613. This bill would expand the scope of practice for pharmacists by allowing them to independently prescribe and dispense contraceptive medications and self-administered contraceptive devices. We are opposed to this expansion of practice rights because the bill lacks appropriate increases in education, training and competency demonstration requirements that protect patients. The AOA and MAOP believe that removing physician involvement from patient care could place the health and safety of Maryland's patients at risk.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. MAOP is a professional medical organization that represents over 1,000 DOs providing patient care in Maryland.

While we value the contributions of pharmacists to the health care delivery system, we believe any expansion of their authority to provide direct patient care without appropriate oversight should be directly related to additional education and competency demonstration requirements. As with all prescription drugs, hormonal contraceptives carry risks of serious side effects, including blood clots, stroke and death. A study published last year in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Psychiatry* also found that using hormonal contraception increased women's risk of developing depression by 23 percent overall, and nearly doubled the risk for teenagers.¹ These risks highlight the need for ongoing and continuous physician involvement in the evaluation of patients on contraceptives. We believe this level of oversight and involvement is the only way to ensure the delivery of high quality health care and patient safety. Expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists to prescribe contraceptives without appropriate oversight and commensurate increases in education and competency demonstration requirements could place patient safety and the public at risk.

¹ Rodriguez, Carmen Heredia. "Large Danish Study Links Contraceptive Use to Risk of Depression." *Kaiser Health News*, Sept. 28, 2016. Available at: <http://khn.org/news/large-danish-study-links-contraceptive-use-to-risk-of-depression/>.

The AOA and MAOP urge you to protect the safety of Maryland's patients by opposing HB 613. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nicholas Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, State Government Affairs, at nshelligo@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,



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President, AOA



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