

Expanding Pharmacists' Effectiveness to Meet Pandemic Needs



In the last seven months, the profession of pharmacy in California, with the advocacy of CPhA, has made great strides in expanding the possibilities for pharmacists to practice at the top of their license. As the pandemic continues to strain the nation's healthcare system, the role of the pharmacists has come into focus as the most accessible yet underutilized healthcare professional. At a time when many patients are reluctant to visit their primary care provider, they often turn to pharmacists for reassurance and guidance on their pressing questions about their health. Advocacy at the federal level has led to authorizations for pharmacists to administer childhood vaccinations, conduct end-to-end COVID-19 testing, and administer the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

These temporary expansions to pharmacists' scope of practice have highlighted the increasing need for pharmacists to gain provider status nationally and to pursue these authorizations on a permanent basis. Pharmacists are highly skilled healthcare professionals who can be the most effective when they are fully embraced members of the healthcare team. However, without provider status and sustainable reimbursement models, patients will be denied the benefits of having pharmacists on their healthcare team, and pharmacists are less able to shoulder the burden of an expanding physician shortage.

I would encourage all pharmacy professionals to advocate for provider status in their state and at the federal level by supporting their state and national pharmacy associations who are working hard to meet the needs of pharmacy professionals. Pharmacists hold the key to achieving optimal outcomes and affordable care for patients across the nation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan A. Bonilla". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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