



June 1, 2020

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2077 (Ting) Hypodermic needles and syringes: SUPPORT

Dear Chairwoman Gonzalez,

The California Retailers Association (CRA) and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) write to express our support for AB 2077 (Ting), which will extend for five years the sunset on existing law that allows pharmacists to furnish sterile syringes without a prescription. AB 2077 is a key component of the state's comprehensive approach to preventing the spread of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C and will have a negligible fiscal impact on the state.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), syringe sharing is the most common cause of hepatitis C transmission and the second most common cause of HIV and hepatitis B transmission in the United States. These diseases negatively impact many Californians and their families and put economic pressure on the healthcare system. The CDC states that the lifetime cost to treat a single case of HIV is nearly \$380,000 (in 2010 dollars).

Access to clean syringes has been demonstrated to reduce the rate of syringe sharing and disease transmission, without increasing crime or drug use rates (CDC, 2019). By continuing to allow adults to purchase sterile syringes without a prescription at community pharmacies until 2026, AB 2077 will reduce the transmission of infectious diseases and decrease healthcare costs.

The California Retailers Association is the only statewide trade association representing all segments of the retail industry including general merchandise, department stores, mass merchandisers, restaurants, convenience stores, supermarkets and grocery stores, chain drug, and specialty retail such as auto, vision, jewelry, hardware and home stores. CRA works on behalf of California's retail industry, which currently operates over 400,000 retail establishments with a gross domestic product of \$330 billion annually and employs over 3 million people—one fourth of California's total employment.

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores represents traditional drug stores, supermarkets and mass merchants with pharmacies. Chains operate over 40,000 pharmacies, and NACDS' over 80 chain member companies include regional chains, with a minimum of four stores, and national companies. Chains employ nearly 3 million individuals, including 157,000 pharmacists. They fill over 3 billion prescriptions yearly, and help patients use medicines correctly and safely, while offering innovative services that improve patient health and health care affordability.

For the reasons listed above, we support AB 2077, which poses insignificant costs to the State. Please do not hesitate to contact Lindsay Gullahorn with Capitol Advocacy at (916) 444-0400 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rachel Michelin".

Rachel Michelin
President
California Retailers Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven C. Anderson".

Steven C. Anderson, FASAE, CAE, IOM
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable Phil Ting, Author
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee