



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHAIN DRUG STORES

April 8, 2021

The Honorable Evan Low, Chair
Assembly Business & Professions Committee
State Capitol, Room 4126
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1328 (Irwin) Clinical laboratory technology and pharmacists - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Low,

The California Retailers Association (CRA) and National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) write to express our strong support for AB 1328 (Irwin), which will allow pharmacists to perform all CLIA-waived tests in California.

To safely reopen our nation and keep Californians healthy, it is imperative that pharmacists are authorized during and after the pandemic to administer all CLIA-waived tests, including COVID tests, in addition to vaccinations as authorized by AB 1710 (Wood, Chpt. 123, 2020). Pharmacies and pharmacists play a critical role in the timely and safe delivery of health care services for patients in California. Millions of Californians turn to their local pharmacies every day for their medications, vaccinations, and more, and pharmacies are readily accessible in most communities with most Californians living within five miles of a pharmacy.

Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-39-20 allows the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to waive any statutory or regulatory professional licensing requirements and amend scopes of practice pertaining to individuals licensed pursuant to Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, including for pharmacists. Pursuant to that Executive Order, DCA issued a waiver on August 25, 2020 allowing pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to perform CLIA-waived (point-of-care) COVID-19 tests. SB 409 would create permanent statutory authority for pharmacists to perform CLIA-waived COVID-19 and flu tests, which is a critical step to ensure the state can continue to combat COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of Californians.

The current pharmacy testing and vaccine flexibilities provided during COVID-19 should extend beyond the pandemic and be expanded to allow pharmacies to best meet the healthcare needs across communities in California. Pharmacists are qualified to provide testing services within their communities and pharmacies are well-equipped healthcare destinations to offer pharmacy testing services, including COVID testing and routine testing services beyond the pandemic. By expanding the emergency waiver authority to allow pharmacists to perform all CLIA-waived testing, AB 1328 will increase the state's testing capacity utilizing pharmacists, which are trusted and experienced healthcare providers. This will aid in recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic, save lives, and get California's economy working again.

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 operates over 400,000 retail establishments with a gross domestic product of billions annually and employs millions of Californians.

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 155,000 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 outlined above, CRA and NACDS support AB 1328 (Irwin) and urge your "aye" vote in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Snyder or Lindsay Gullahorn with Capitol Advocacy at jsnyder@capitoladvocacy.com or lgullahorn@capitoladvocacy.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Rachel Michelin, President
California Retailers Association



Steve C. Anderson, FASAE, CAE, IOM
President & Chief Executive Officer
National Association of Chain Drug Stores

cc: The Honorable Jacqui Irwin, Author
Members, Assembly Business & Professions Committee