



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHAIN DRUG STORES

September 14, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 409 (Caballero) Pharmacist COVID-19 and Flu Testing – SIGNATURE REQUEST

Dear Governor Newsom,

The California Retailers Association (CRA) and National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) write to respectfully request your signature on SB 409 (Caballero), which will permanently authorize pharmacists to perform important testing services, including COVID-19 and flu tests.

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 billions of dollars 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.

Throughout the pandemic, pharmacy providers have been a cornerstone in the delivery of healthcare services to the public, providing essential services such as vaccines, testing services, health screenings and other important clinical care offerings. To continue the path towards safely reopening our nation and keeping Californians healthy, it is imperative that the public has continued access to these important services provided by pharmacists now and into the future. SB 409, which will permanently authorize pharmacists to administer CLIA-waived tests, including COVID-19 and flu tests, serves this important purpose. 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.

CRA and NACDS thank you for your Executive Order N-39-20, which 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 your 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 most CLIA-waived tests, including COVID-19 and flu tests, which is a critical step to help 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 to allow pharmacies to best meet the healthcare needs across communities in California. By making permanent the emergency waiver authority to allow pharmacists to perform specified CLIA-waived testing, SB 409 will improve access to pharmacy testing services provided by trusted and experienced healthcare providers. This will aid in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, save lives and get California's economy working again.

For the reasons outlined above, CRA and NACDS support SB 409 (Caballero) and urge you to sign this important bill. 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



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

cc: The Honorable Anna Caballero, Author
Stuart Thompson, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Anne Sodergren, Executive Officer, Board of Pharmacy