

Damoth, Debbie@DCA

From: Steve <skphung@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2023 4:17 PM
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Remote processing

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: skphung@yahoo.com

To whom it may concern , I am a licensed and registered pharmacist in California who have worked for a major retail chain since graduating in 2003 . I am writing you because I am concerned that new laws are being written that may affect the legality of remote verification . As a retail pharmacist I can attest that remote verification plays a crucial role in reducing the workload , reducing errors and increasing my time to better serve my patients . Getting rid of remote verification would do great harm to a pharmacy that is already over worked and under staffed .

Thank you ,
Steve phung

Sent from my iPhone

Damoth, Debbie@DCA

From: Christine Jacobs <christinejacobs@att.net>
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2023 3:41 PM
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Remote Processing Waiver Exception

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: christinejacobs@att.net

Hello, my name is Christine Jacobs and I am a Work At Home pharmacist with Walgreens pharmacy. I appreciate you taking the time out to read my quick note.

I would just like to quickly voice my request to have the Board of Pharmacy consider continuing to allow pharmacists to work remotely.

I believe remote pharmacy practice greatly impacts the quality of work that a pharmacist can deliver when interruptions are minimized. I also believe it allows the pharmacist in the store to provide quality service and patient care when the burden of certain tasks are removed.

Also, speaking as a person with health conditions that could worsen with the day to day activities of normal duties, remote pharmacy has allowed me to continue to work full-time in the same capacity as any other work at home pharmacist. It also allows for a wonderful work life balance.

Thank you so much for taking time to read my concerns.

Sincerely,
Christine Jacobs RPh 50886

Sent from my iPhone

Damoth, Debbie@DCA

From: Julia D. <jdong81@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2023 3:22 PM
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Pharmacy working remotely waiver

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: jdong81@yahoo.com

Dear Dr. Oh @ CA Pharmacy Board,

Hi DR. Oh, this is Dr. Julia Dong, a fellow California pharmacist. As a retail pharmacist of 17 years, working remotely the last 4 years, I have impacted many patients health and life. But I have never had more impact on patient care than I did the last 4 years working remotely.

When I was still a retail pharmacist, I first had the experience of working at a store that was equipped with Pilot around 2015, that means a remote pharmacist helps the store to verify prescription for certain busy hours of the day. As the only pharmacist working at the time, it was such a huge help. Instead of hopping between verifying prescription on the computer, to the filling station, and to the consultation window, I had more time to focus on patient care. I was able to spend a longer time on patient consultation, to step away in the next room to giving immunization, and answering doctor phone calls on a timely manner. Because some pharmacist working remotely was helping me verifying prescription, I was able to do more pharmacist jobs, shorten patient wait time on the phone and in waiting line.

As much as I enjoyed working in a retail setting, I transferred to work remotely 4 years ago for a personal reason. My son at the time was only 3 years old and has seizure. I had received numerous calls from his preschool whenever he had a seizure episode, but I couldn't do anything because I was working nearly 1 hour away from home. I was a good pharmacist loyal to my job and patients, but I failed my duty as a mom. So I decided to work remotely to be closer to my son's preschool and be able to help whenever he has active seizure.

But after I transferred to working remotely, I realized not only I am able to help my family, I am also impacting more families out there, nationwide. Instead of verifying prescription for only 1 store, I am able to verify prescription for many states, many stores in the US. Especially during Covid time, while many stores had to shut down due to rioting, or covid outbreak, we were able to provide nonstop patient care and saving so many more lives. Just to give u an example, my best friend is the pharmacist manager working next to LAX. During covid time, her store had to give up to 200 covid shots per day on top of other daily immunization, and she never had extra staffing help. On many days, she didn't even have full staff, because her techs/pharmacists were out with covid, She called me and said she can't thank us enough for verifying her prescriptions. Even though covid is no longer a big concern now, but our care and help should not stop. Just because Covid is no longer a pandemic, that does not mean remote

pharmacist jobs are no longer important. We are still cutting patient wait times in the window and drive through, doctors no longer have to wait on hold for 20-30 min because the pharmacist is too busy, and patient consultation does not need to be cut short because the pharmacist has to go back to her computer to verify hundreds of prescriptions.

As a pharmacist of 17 years, who cares about my patients and every patient out there, I plea the board to please allow us to work from home. Your decision will not only impact my personal life, my career, and many other pharmacist' lives and patients lives out there. Please think about every single patient we have served and helped working remotely, and every struggling retail pharmacist we helped and their patients. Let us keep working remotely and doing our pharmacist job.

Sincerely,

Julia Dong
California RPH

From: [Mullen, Sharon](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Cc: [Mullen, Sharon](#)
Subject: remote processing
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 3:49:56 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: sharon.mullen@walgreens.com

Dear Ms Sodergren,

I was dismayed to learn that the current law for remote processing of prescriptions is under scrutiny and may not be legal in its current form. It seems that it would of been the responsibility of the BOP to take correct action and rectify the law and pass the proper legislation. It would place many pharmacists on unemployment.

I have been licensed in California since 1994, I worked 24 years in retail and after suffering a heart condition from the work stress , I was able to work as a remote processor for Optum as a temp for 5 months then I secured a job with Walgreens as a remote processor in 2017. It took me 9 months to secure a job in this oversaturated market . I love my remote job and I was willing to take a large pay decrease to be able to alleviate much stress . The retail setting has become more stressful in the past years with pharmacists having to wear many more hats. Covid has increased the amount of vaccinations and tests which all require time that is never available. The job of a pharmacist is considered one of the most stressful professions , we used to be second to air traffic controllers . All my former colleagues that still work retail and hospital have stress related health conditions. All are under 40 years old. The profession has gotten worse not better.

As a remote pharmacist, I am able to verify 4 times the amount of prescriptions that I did in a retail setting. I am more accurate and efficient and my employer has found having remote workers more profitable. We are able to take on much of the workload of the pharmacist working in busy stores so that they can properly answer patient questions and administer vaccines. Walgreens has also been instrumental during times of disaster to divert prescriptions from stores that are closed for hurricanes or floods and the remote processors are able to take on the heavy lifting and get those patients their meds via central fill locations. We remote pharmacists are integral to disaster assistance . Also rural areas also benefit from this practice and also urban areas heavily affected by stores leaving certain neighborhoods . We offer an alternative for those people that need there meds who might not have mail order options of insurance.

Certainly there is something that can be done on your end to be able to continue this growing practice. Many other states have approved this practice. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sharon Mullen (47082)

From: [Chia-Hui Wen](#)
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Remote Processing
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 4:57:10 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: chiahuiwen1@gmail.com

To whom it may concern,

My name is Chia-Hui Wen, a Work at home pharmacist with Walgreens. I've lived in California my whole life and worked in California as a pharmacist my entire career. I love being a pharmacist!
I've worked at very high volume retail stores for most of my career. When prescriptions were remotely verified, I was able to provide better care to our patients by giving better consultations, providing vaccinations in a safe and timely manner, answering phone calls, and serving drive through patients. When the opportunity to work from home came about 7 years ago, I jumped at the opportunity. I wanted to help my peers by reducing workload. I could now focus exclusively on prescription processing so pharmacists in the front line can do better and feel better doing their work. They are overworked and errors may occur. Working remotely, I have far less distractions and ultimately less errors. Remote processing simply should NOT stop. Please re-evaluate the decision to end remote processing. This would negatively impact our community of pharmacists and our profession.
CA Board of Pharmacy licensed me as a pharmacist 20 years ago to work as a pharmacist and that's what I'd like to continue to do.

Thank you for your time,

Chia-Hui Wen PharmD

From: [Tiffany Wong](#)
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Remote Processing (Committee Meeting)
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 6:09:40 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: tiffanywong821@gmail.com

To the Board's Executive Officer and Licensing Committee Chairperson, Dr. Seung Oh, as well as all other Board and Committee members,

My name is Tiffany Wong, and I've been a practicing pharmacist since graduating from University of the Pacific in 2012. This committee meeting and its decision is near and dear to my heart as I'm currently employed as a remote processing pharmacist and my job will be directly impacted.

Following graduation from pharmacy school, I was employed as a pharmacist in the retail setting. To say it was an adjustment would be putting it lightly. The handling of work demands, patients' demands on me, and societal pressure not to make mistakes really put a lot of stress on me as a person, during and after work hours. Working in retail has taught me the importance of multitasking, but also that it means my focus is actually split and I may not be as careful in checking my work. Between my technicians, patients (in person and on the phone), managers all clamoring for my time and attention, I felt like I hardly had time to verify prescriptions.

Some time during my 6 years in retail pharmacy, my store was equipped with remote processing, meaning a large part of my prescription verification duty would be completed remotely by colleagues. It changed the whole flow of my day at work. Suddenly I had time to focus on my patients -- giving in depth consultations, immunizations, calling doctors' offices to clarify prescriptions. It enabled me to devote more of my work time helping my patients the way they needed to be helped, by listening to them and providing necessary hands-on services for them instead of just staring at the computer screen. Remote processing positively enhanced the way I practiced retail pharmacy.

Eventually I made my way to the remote processing side of my company, and this also had an enormous impact on my life. I had cut my daily commute of 2 hours to zero, allowing me to sleep more and create a better work life balance. With my new free time, I was able to recharge in my off hours and work more efficiently during my work hours. All of a sudden I was energized and even more focused while remote processing. Without phones ringing off the hook and coworkers asking for help, I could verify prescriptions in silence and decrease the chance of making a costly mistake. I feel that as a remote processing pharmacist, I greatly contribute to the success of my colleagues in the retail setting, and in turn, serve our patients in an effective and efficient way. I wholeheartedly believe that my job is vital and aligns with the Board's purpose in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the people of California without compromising integrity and honesty.

I am hopeful that the Board will understand the importance of the role of a remote processing pharmacist in the California healthcare system.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tiffany Wong

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Tiffany Wong, PharmD
tiffanywong821@gmail.com
626-641-8840

From: [Christina Song](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Remote processing
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 6:33:25 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: cjsong@gmail.com

Dear Board Members,

My name is Christina and I have been a retail pharmacist for 19 years. The last 6 years I have been verifying prescriptions remotely for Walgreens. As a trained professional who used to work the front line at the store, the remote pharmacists are fundamental to providing excellent customer care in the pharmacy. We allow the retail pharmacist to spend more time with the patients, caring for their needs, and reducing errors and stress.

As a mother of twin boys, working remotely allows me to have a better work life balance. I am able to see my children more often, reduce my stress and anxiety levels, and increase my mental health.

I ask you to please reconsider and continue to allow pharmacists to verify prescriptions remotely, as we have been doing for the last decade. We are trying to work towards a more patient centered health industry and this will allow us to continue to do so.

Thank you very much for your time,
Christina Song

From: [Vazquez, Vanessa](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Remote processing
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 6:50:06 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: vanessa.munoz@walgreens.com

Hello Dr. Seung Oh,

My name is Vanessa Vazquez and I am a Group Supervisor here at Walgreens. I oversee a group of California Pharmacists who process prescriptions remotely. I would like to respectfully ask that CA Pharmacists be allowed to continue working from home. They have always expressed how much they love working from home because it allows them to have a better work-life balance. They're able to do a great job providing care to the residents of California and be literally as close as possible to home, which allows them to also provide better care to their immediate families. If remote processing was no longer allowed in CA, I would lose half of my team, and my job as their leader would have to be re-evaluated. The board's decision would not only negatively impact remotely-working CA Pharmacists, but everyone including myself that works to support those Pharmacists.

Thank you for your time,

Vanessa Vazquez
Group Supervisor

Walgreen Co. | 8337 Southpark Cir, Orlando, FL 32819
Telephone 407 541 4943

Member of Walgreens Boots Alliance | [MyWalgreens.com](https://www.MyWalgreens.com)

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From: [Cabezuela, Elizabeth](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Remote processing
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 6:52:26 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: elizabeth.cabezuela@walgreens.com

For the Executive Officer and Licensing Committee Chairperson

Dear Dr. Seung Oh,

My name is Elizabeth Cabezuela, and I'm a California Registered Pharmacist and a remote processor for Walgreens. I have been a pharmacist for over 15 years and love every minute of it.

I started my career as a community pharmacist: verifying and dispensing medications, counseling patients, and administering vaccines. For nine years, I helped every patient as much as possible with the time and resources I was given. However, it was a stressful time in my life. Between fulfilling constant customer service needs and decreased technician hours, I was overwhelmed. When I found a job listing for a remote processor for Walgreens, I jumped and fought for it! What an excellent opportunity to work in an environment that can help many more patients!

Walgreens strives for patient safety. Patients should know their medications are in excellent care with pharmacists whose priority is safety and accuracy. My position as a remote processor is so essential. I am verifying prescriptions and reviewing patient profiles without constant distractions. I do not have ringing phones, other people around, or any other tasks-- I am focused on getting my work done safely, correctly, and promptly. Patients may not see or talk to pharmacists like me, but that's okay. I know they'll go home with the proper medication.

Pharmacists are already inundated with prescriptions, doctor and patient calls, requests, and more. We give them time to work on other tasks, while we focus on the details of prescriptions. Ultimately making our patients satisfied and well cared for.

Personally, my job has given me the perfect work-life balance. I'm a mother of 3 children-- ages 7 to 13. I spend the mornings prepping for school and the evenings with homework and bedtime. Once they are in school, I am just a few steps away from my office. I don't waste time commuting, allowing me to spend more time with my family.

I ask the California Board of Pharmacy to continue to allow Remote Processing. We are dedicated pharmacists who want to continue assisting our colleagues and patients.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Cabezuela

California Registered Pharmacist

License number: RPH 60027

cellphone: 858-603-2291

Pharmacist, Centralized Services

From: [Stark, Aaron](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Remote processing
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 6:54:44 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: aaron.stark@walgreens.com

Hello,

My name is Aaron Stark, I am a CA licensed RPh currently working in a remote processing position. I have been licensed since 1996. I managed a 24 hour pharmacy in the Bay Area from 1996-2004, was a district supervisor in the central valley from 2004-2007, and managed another 24 hour pharmacy from 2007-2016. I have been in my current position from 2016 to present. My wife is also an RPh currently working in a Walgreens store. I am writing today to address the current issue facing the board with regard to remote processing. My primary concern is for patient safety, with a secondary concern of increasing the misery index for both patients and pharmacists in a climate that is already pretty miserable. Working remotely allows pharmacists to process a large volume of rx's in a controlled, distraction free environment, which is far better for patient safety than in a busy pharmacy with multiple points of constant distraction. Putting the hundreds of thousands of rx's that are currently remotely processed back into the pharmacy would cause chaos and greatly increase the chance of making errors. It would also mean less access to quality care for patients because pharmacists would be far more tied up trying to manage this workload at a time when the workload is already overwhelming.

On a personal note, this job absolutely saved my career as a pharmacist. After 20 years I was ready to move on to other interests, having seen what the working conditions had become and the negative trajectory they were on. I am now content with spending the rest of my career as a pharmacist as a result of working in a remote setting position.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Aaron Stark, RPh

From: [Hanaa Basalious](#)
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Remotely Pharmacist work
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 8:28:34 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: hanaamm@yahoo.com

Hi Dr. Seung Oh,

My name is Hanaa Basalious and I am a licensed Pharmacist in the state of CA. My present job is as a Walgreens Health Outcomes Pharmacist working from home in CA. I started this job 3 years ago and I appreciate doing what I can to offer patients the best healthcare possible. I am given the chance to do personalized care and medication therapy management that most patients need.

I was working as a retail pharmacist for more that 10 years, and during this period my passion and concern was how to find the opportunity to spend more time with my patients to give them the required information to adhere to their medicine and avoid the probability of not taking the medications for any reason. This includes taking the medications the right way and preventing any drug-drug interaction or misunderstanding of doctor's instructions. I provide them with health recommendations to avoid any complication of their health issues that may lead to hospitalization which is the most valid concern for health insurance institutes in the USA. As a pharmacist working in the community pharmacy I wasn't able to give the patient the amount of time or level of care I can now because of my dedicated role in patient outcomes.

Just yesterday, I was speaking with a patient about his health condition and how to get his blood sugar level and blood pressure under control to avoid various complications. He was so appreciative of the call and he told me that even the doctor had no time to inform him about these things. The patient continued to tell me that he has a cousin who had serious health issues that led to amputation because nobody informed him about how to avoid complications. The patient told me that he felt valued being treated as a human being, and not a case and he is very thankful that somebody cares for his health.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain how important it is to the patient to keep this service for the sake of the health benefits for the community.

Best Regards,
Hanaa Basalious
Licensed CA Pharmacist

From: [Noreen Olmsted](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Remote Processing
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 7:02:19 AM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: noreenie1@mac.com

Dear Dr. Seung Oh,

I am a retail pharmacist that has worked remote processing since 2018. It has come to my attention that the BOP is discussing if this will continue to be allowed. I believe it should be.

Remote Processing allows for a better and safer experience in the stores for both pharmacists and patients. By having a pharmacist remotely take care of some tasks, the pharmacist in the store can focus on patient facing tasks. This would include the final verification of the medication, but also having time for consultation and immunization. The in store pharmacist would also have more time for corresponding with prescribers to benefit patients. Pharmacy is incredibly stressful and having some of these tasks done remotely benefits every body.

Remote processing also allows another avenue of work. It provide a less physically strenuous environment. It also provides a better work life balance for those that need it.

Pharmacists of different types have been working remote for many years I truly believe it benefits all, the pharmacists, the patients, and the profession.

Thank you for your time

Noreen Olmsted PharmD

From: [Delia Monsalud](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Remote processing
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 8:18:11 AM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: delia.monsalud@gmail.com

Hello,

My name is Delia Monsalud. I am a work at home pharmacist with Walgreens. I have been a registered pharmacist since 2009 and I've been in the work at home position since 2015.

I have always been grateful for this position as it allowed me to practice pharmacy safely and balance my work with my family life. This position allows me to care for my patients with less disruptions and greater ability to focus on making sure I verify the correct medications as well as on communicating with the store pharmacists about patient concerns.

When I verify prescriptions remotely I'm helping out a pharmacist in the store who might be counseling or administering an immunization. While I'm verifying prescriptions, the pharmacist does not need to worry about the work load that's piling up.

I also worked in a retail pharmacy and I can say there were many times when I would have needed someone to help out verify so I could be more present for my patients, not hurrying through consultations or feel overwhelmed by the work adding up while giving immunizations or answering calls.

The work at home program is helping our in store colleagues provide better face to face care, while I can work with minimal interruptions to ensure patient safety.

On a personal level this position also allows me more flexibility at home in my personal life.

I've been grateful to be able to practice pharmacy in this way.

I respectfully ask the committee to consider my experience when evaluating the changes it intends to make to our ability to practice pharmacy in a work from home environment.

Sincerely

Delia Monsalud, PharmD, Rph

Sent from my iPhone



January 20, 2023

The Honorable Seung Oh, President
California State Board of Pharmacy
2720 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95833

Re: Board of Pharmacy Licensing Committee Discussion & Consideration of Provisions for Remote Processing

Dear President Oh,

On behalf of the California Retailers Association (CRA), I write to express our support for the practice of remote processing and to urge the Board of Pharmacy to work on a solution to ensure that pharmacy personnel can continue to work remotely to perform specified functions.

Many of CRA's pharmacy members currently utilize remote processing and have incorporated this practice into their business operations both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pharmacy team members have been able to perform a variety of tasks outside of the pharmacy, including data entry. The ability for pharmacy team members to perform these duties at home has created significant, immeasurable benefits for the pharmacy workforce, which ultimately has led to better access for patients.

Ensuring that remote processing can continue is particularly timely in light of the Board's recent discussions and actions related to pharmacy working conditions and medication errors. Remote processing allows many pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to work from home, which has helped to improve work-life balance and prevent burnout. In addition, non-clinical tasks can be performed outside the pharmacy, freeing up more time inside the pharmacy to focus on direct patient care and preventing errors by reducing distractions.

If remote processing is prohibited, many pharmacy employees will either be forced to work at the pharmacy or potentially lose their jobs. Given the current lack of available workforce and the pressures the entire healthcare sector is facing, we respectfully request that the board take steps to ensure that remote processing can continue indefinitely for all pharmacy sectors, for all types of pharmacy personnel at their homes or other locations outside the pharmacy. Doing so will allow the benefits of remote processing for both pharmacy employees and patients to continue, including workforce flexibility, reduced diversion since that cannot happen remotely, and prevention of medication and other errors.

The California Retailers Association is the only statewide trade association representing all segments of the retail industry including general merchandise, department stores, mass merchandisers, online marketplaces, convenience stores, supermarkets and grocery stores, chain drug, and specialty retail such as auto, vision, jewelry, hardware, and home stores. Our members include national chains as well as independent retailers from across California. California retail is the state's largest industry, operating in

over 505,000 retail stores which accounts for over 25 percent of California's jobs with a combined \$542 billion on the state's GDP.

Please do not hesitate to contact Lindsay Gullahorn or Jennifer Snyder with Capitol Advocacy at lgullahorn@capitoladvocacy.com or jsnyder@capitoladvocacy.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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

Rachel Michelin
President & CEO
California Retailers Association

cc: Anne Sodergren, Executive Officer, Board of Pharmacy

From: [Reyen, Quang](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: January 24, 2023 Meeting Re: Remote Processing Waiver
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 12:13:33 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: quang.reyen@walgreens.com

Dr. Seoung Oh,

Please take a moment to consider other components of the "Remote Processing Waiver" beyond the traditional role of data entry, data review, and clinical review.

I am a Health Outcomes Pharmacist working remotely from home. I spend more than ninety percent of my daily time reaching out to and speaking with patients in order to improve medication adherence and optimize therapy. Sometimes the conversations may be a quick five-minute check-in or a forty-five-minute medication review depending on the patient's needs. I have had the pleasure of providing this beneficial service well before the Covid-19 pandemic and the initiation of the remote processing waiver. I gladly report that many patients are positively surprised that this service is available to them and are extremely happy that a pharmacist personally checked-in on them. Due to the strain of our health care system at all levels, what my colleagues and I perform daily provides patients access to quality health care.

Two main stakeholders are the patient and the pharmacist. Without remote pharmacy services, patients will have limited access to quality health care. Rarely will you find a patient who can say that they were able to speak to a healthcare professional uninterrupted for forty-five minutes without making an appointment. Patients who experienced this service appreciate the pharmacist's compassion concerning their health. The role as a pharmacist evolved significantly over the last few decades by adapting to changes in our healthcare system. My daily interaction with patients remotely is a natural extension of that. Providing drug information services and performing therapeutic interventions at a personal level is one aspect of pharmacy services striving to improve patient health outcomes.

Please consider changes that will allow pharmacists like me to continue providing quality health care services to patients. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Dr. Quang Reyen, RPH

Ngoc Lien T. Nguyen
12521 Sundance Ave
San Diego, CA 92129
January 19, 2023

California State Board of Pharmacy

Licensing Committee

Re: Letter of Support for Remote Processing

Dear Licensing Committee Chair,

My name is Ngoc Lien T. Nguyen, a Health Outcome Pharmacist at Walgreens Pharmacy. I am writing this letter to support remote processing. As a health outcome pharmacist, I work remotely to contact patients at risk of being non-adherent on their medications and work with them to identify any barriers that may be present to prevent them from taking those medications. I help them overcome those barriers through either counseling or by using various programs that Walgreens offers such as Save-A-Trip Refills and 90-day supply fills. I'm accountable of making sure that patients are being adherent on their medications to lower the risk of disease progression and further complications. Some patients live in rural areas, and they appreciate the calls to review their medications at the comfort of their home. The remote processing waiver has allowed me to help more patients with any issues they may have.

I believe the remote allowance is vital to my job. I have practiced pharmacy every day in a non-traditional setting before COVID-19. My workplace has trainings and policies to protect confidential patient information. There is also a team to review the calls to make sure we display the courtesy to patients and protect their information. In addition, working remotely has allowed me to have a work-life balance to be able to take care of my mother who is terminally ill.

I urge you to please reconsider your interpretation of remote processing, not allowing this will greatly impact my pharmacy practice for patient care, especially for the patients who have limited access to healthcare, and my work-life balance. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain my situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ngoc Nguyen".

Ngoc Lien T. Nguyen, Pharm.D.

From: [Patel, Nima](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Cc: [nimapatel25@gmail.com](#)
Subject: Remote order processing
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 9:20:56 AM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: nima.patel@walgreens.com

Dear Board of Pharmacy,
Hello. My name is Nima Patel. I am a registered pharmacist in the state of California. With over 25 years of experience, primarily in a retail setting, I have come to realize that pharmacies need help to ensure accurate prescriptions for the safety of their patients. I have had retail experience in many pharmacies, and the one thing that they all have in common is that the pharmacist is spread thin and overworked. By remote verification, we are able to reduce the stress of the retail pharmacist and ensure safety for our patients.

Since August of 2015, Walgreens has given me the opportunity to work from home. This has been very beneficial since I am able to practice pharmacy as well as balance home life. By working at home, I am able to limit the distractions and concentrate on the patient's prescription for accuracy and allow the retail pharmacist to spend more time on consultations. With the proper guardrails in place on the software systems and access points used remotely, there should not be any security concerns. Please allow us to Work at Home.

Thank you
Nima Patel
Rph#49648

From: [Jerry Monsalud](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Remote processing
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 3:36:02 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: jmonsalud@gmail.com

Hello,

My name is Jerry Monsalud. I have been a registered pharmacist since 2009. I have worked in the retail pharmacy field all my career. Since remote processing became available at Walgreens, my workload became more manageable. I can focus on face to face consultations and spend time with immunizations, answer calls or help out customers with finding on over the counter product. I don't have to worry about falling behind and not having prescriptions ready for our customers. I can trust the process because I know my work at home colleagues are able to focus and concentrate on accuracy and safety for our customers.

I would like to add my voice in support of continuing the remote processing program.

Sincerely

Jerry Monsalud, PharmD, Rph

From: [Duyen Pham](#)
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Remote Processing
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 5:36:42 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: dtpharmd515@gmail.com

To whom it may concern:

Hello. My name is DP and I am a work at home pharmacist in California for Walgreens Pharmacy. I am writing today to share my thoughts and concern to the committee's consideration to no longer allow pharmacists to work remotely effective May 2023.

I have been blessed and fortunate enough to work both on the retail side of pharmacy as a staff and pharmacy manager for 12 years at extremely high volume 24 hour stores and remote processing side of pharmacy for 7 years and I can wholeheartedly say that taking away remote processing will have a huge negative impact on the ultimate goal of what we set out to do as a pharmacy and pharmacist; to provide the utmost quality care to the people of our community in an orderly and safe manner. Remote processing plays a crucial role in allowing pharmacists at the retail stores the additional time needed to provide quality care to patients. It frees them up to enable them to provide meaningful consultations about new to therapy medications or general questions about OTC meds. It allows them time to administer vaccinations to patients without having to worry about rushing back to verify a prescription for patients physically waiting in the pharmacy for their own medications (because we are supporting them remotely). It gives them time to call doctors to verify prescription orders and call patients to ask them about their new medications. I am able to share all the reasons above because my 24 hour pharmacy store was supported by remote processing when I was working in retail and managing it so I can attest that it truly does help to assist us in all the examples I stated above. The support that our remote processing team provides overall enhances and promotes a smoother and more efficient work flow at the retail stores and therefore reduces chaos, potential errors, mental, emotional and physical stress. It also helps to increase productivity, safety and quality care.

More importantly and personally, this remote processing role has provided me what many who work in healthcare are striving and hoping to have and that is a balanced and flexible work life and family life. Remote processing has helped me tremendously in decreasing my stress levels while still allowing me to work as a team with my retail colleagues to provide care to our patients. This has resulted in a healthier me mentally and physically and it has given me a more flexible and balanced life for myself and the people that matters the most to me in life and that is my family. For that I'm truly grateful.

Thank you for your time and I hope you will truly consider NOT taking away this remote processing from California and revising it to be allowed indefinitely. Have a great day.

Warmest Regards,
DP (CA Work at Home Pharmacist)

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Julie W](#)
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Remote processing BPC
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 4:21:56 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: juliezhou31@gmail.com

To Dr. Seung Oh,

My name is Julie Wan and I am emailing my testimony regarding upcoming board hearing for remote processing license.

I've been in the practice for the past 15 years and the last five years working from home has been life changing to say the least. From a pharmacist point of view, what we do as centralized pharmacists is crucial to the success of delivering quality care in this fast changing world that we all live in. We allow in-store pharmacists to spend quality time with their patients instead of worrying about the never ending Que that they must clear or the phone calls that just never stops. We give them the freedom to do what they do best, which is to connect with the community and help those who are in need. I think to take away this tremendously important help from their daily workload is a disservice to the community. From a personal point of view, I could not be where I am today with my family and career if I had not been given the opportunity to work with Walgreens WFH team. This has allowed me to continue my career path without having to sacrifice time with my family. I was able to maximize my time for work due to my lack of commute and witness more milestones of my children and family. I truly believe we all thrive to find that near perfect work life balance and I have found that here with Walgreens. Please reconsider your decision to end this remote processing license. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Julie Wan, RPH

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Julie Yin Wan

From: [Sharon Mullen](#)
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: remote processing waivers
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 1:34:20 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I am a remote pharmacist in the state of California. I have worked for Walgreens and Optum as a remote processor . I am not understanding why the BOP might cancel this practice. Remote pharmacists reduce the stress of store pharmacists , We take the heavy load of trying to focus and verify a prescription for accuracy off the shoulders of the store and are able to accomplish this in a quiet setting. We are more accurate and much , much faster . The BOP is supposed to govern to help public safety, instead pharmacist in the last ten years have had more and more to do with more and more regulations and no time to do all this . Your first priority is safety. Remote pharmacy is a solution, the first solution that I can remember in decades. The store pharmacists are bogged down with VAERS reports, misfill reports , audits , CURES reports , Vaccines and Covid tests . All of this prevents accuracy, patience and the opportunity of face to face with patients. Try calling a retail pharmacy and see how long you are on hold before you get a real person.

Even though the State of Emergency for Covid ends February 2023, The Gates Foundations has had another tabletop exercise predicting another pandemic in 2025 called S.E.E.R.S.. (severe epidemic enterovirus respiratory syndrome) It is expected to start in South America and have a mortality of over 70%. There is also worries of Marburg. We have also had devastating fires, floods and earthquakes and riots. The remote pharmacist can help redirect the flow of prescriptions that are e-prescribed and type and verify at another location , then the Rx's can be remotely filled . Walgreens have been recognized for their efforts to help disaster areas from hurricanes floods and riot areas . Most of the effected are the poorer neighborhoods . How is this equity, if you don't allow remote pharmacists. Many of these patients do not have insurance to be able to have a mailorder prescription. How is the BOP helping if pharmacies are pulling out of crime ridden areas? The nation is moving forward with innovations and tele-medicine , why is California going backward? California's Covid response was mismanaged and now you will be removing a tool in the toolbox to help during Climate disasters, riots, and future pandemics. The infrastructure is already in place and working and it can not be instantly reestablished in minutes, but in minutes Walgreens was able to help Hurricane victims in Florida, floods in Tennessee and Texas

The security of patient information I feel is secure with remote processing, the software does not allow us to randomly look at a patient file. We take an oath in the State of California and all our keystrokes are monitored . The Social Media giants in California have far more access to a person's private info and they work remotely. Please reconsider extending the waivers or changing the rules or law to make

remote processing permanent .

Thank you for your consideration, a future unemployed remote pharmacist

From: [Le, Maihieu](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Cc: [maihieu@gmail.com](#)
Subject: remote processing
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 1:31:26 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: maihieu.le@walgreens.com

To Dr Seung Oh,

My name is Mai Le and I have been practicing pharmacy at the retail level for 18 years, with the last 8 years being a work-at-home pharmacist doing remote prescription verification. I am aware of many others like me, not only at the retail practice but the hospital and PBM side alike, who have been remote processing a lot longer than I have. That being said, I am confused by the sudden reevaluation or reinterpretation of a law that would no longer allow pharmacists to provide patient care this way.

Before centralization and remote processing, as a retail pharmacist you were the sole person to run the pharmacy and ensure the patients were taken care. This could make your job and day very stressful and difficult to balance if you wanted to provide top notch care but also ensure no one waited too long, because no one else but me, the pharmacist, could verify prescriptions, administer the vaccinations, provide the consultations, take in new prescriptions, or answer patient medicine questions.

In my final weeks at the store before transitioning remotely, I witnessed something amazing. My soon-to-be colleagues who were already verifying remotely, were verifying prescriptions for my pharmacy intermittently throughout the day. That meant I could have peace of mind walking away from my computer verification workstation to focus on the other important tasks of the day mentioned previously, really building those relationships with my patients.

So when I started working from home to verify prescriptions remotely, I knew what an important and essential role I played in the care of my patients. Even if I was practicing "behind the scenes" to provide the support for my colleagues at the store level, I was contributing to patient safety and care. I could now focus solely on verifying prescriptions without the constant distractions of phone calls, people talking, and the need to multitask while verifying. And by working from home, I was able to finally have a more favorable work life balance. I never stopped practicing pharmacy, I just did it from home, processing remotely.

I urge you to please reevaluate your consideration. By re-interpreting the same law that's been in effect for ages to now so that I can no longer work from home, will have not only a personal and professional cost, but will also be disruptive to the care of our patients who see pharmacists as their first-line care.

Thank you so much,
Mai Le

From: [Ng, Teresa](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Upcoming Board Meeting regarding Remote Processing
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 9:30:23 AM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: prvs=377b111ff=teresa.ng@optioncare.com

Dear CA BOP, Dr Oh, or whom it may concern,

I would like to write in to request that the Board approves the current "Remote Processing Waiver" and make it permanent.

The reason for this is that since the pandemic, our organization has implemented a hybrid/ remote working process our pharmacy staff, and we were allowed to WFH majority of the time, and this has been a great help not only to minimize Covid exposure as it was initially intended, but also a great improvement in Pharmacists' Quality of life, and work-health balance.

For my type of pharmacist work, I feel that the exact same work can still be done accurately, safely and effectively from home, and I saved a lot of time on my commute in LA traffic, and needless to say, the money saved on gas and helping the environment.

I believe as long as we have the right rules/ regulations, and all our advancement in technology, remote processing can be a success and will continue to move the entire pharmacy industry into the 21st century.

Please kindly consider making remote processing permanent. Thank you.

Teresa Ng, Pharm.D.

Clinical Pharmacist

Crescent Healthcare, an Option Care owned company

Los Angeles Specialty Center of Excellence

Toll free Number 877-872-4844 Ext 2841 OR Direct Dial Number 562-347-2841

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From: [roya r](#)
To: Sodergren, Anne@DCA
Subject: Remote Processing Waiver Continuation
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 10:30:07 AM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: royarmerf@gmail.com

Dear Dr. Seung Oh,

My name is Roya Merfeld and I have been practicing as a full-time remote Health Outcome Clinical and prn Data Review Pharmacist for a major chain pharmacy for about 4 years. The remote processing waiver has been beneficial for both patients and myself. With the lack of distractions provided by remote work I can have longer one on ones with patients and verify prescriptions more accurately.

I am able to focus on patient education, medication consults, identify duplication of therapy, barriers in care, and gaps in therapy. Staff pharmacists cannot afford to provide the same level of care with their focus on dispensing, immunizations, and point of sales activities. Patients proclaim they have never had such in depth consultation and time given to them with any health care professional and really appreciate the service provided.

This remote position has benefited myself because of my on-going health challenges affecting my joints, mobility and ability to drive. Eliminating my ability to work remotely would severely limit my ability to contribute to my community and would force me further onto disability with no viable career alternatives.

Patient privacy and security is also a priority at my home office in California, with a closed door and windows, no access to printers, and company-provided equipment that views patient information over an encrypted connection without any data stored locally.

In light of the shortage of healthcare professionals, I feel that patients will suffer if the waiver is not renewed. I implore the board to renew this waiver and continue the efforts to permanently allow remote pharmacy practice. I really appreciate your time and help. Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Roya Merfeld
Pharm. D

From: [Vu, Katherine](#)
To: [Sodergren, Anne@DCA](#)
Subject: Remote Order Processing
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 3:22:38 PM

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the CA Gov network. Do not open attachments unless you know the sender: katherine.vu@walgreens.com

Dear Dr. Seung Oh and to whom it may concern,

My name is Katherine, and I have been a pharmacist since 2018. During this time, my goal has always been to improve patient care and health outcomes. As a result, I have taken on a work-from-home position that has allowed me to put patients and patient care at the forefront. In this role, I am able to speak to patients about their medications in an environment free from the usual distractions of a bustling pharmacy. Multiple patients that I have spoken to have extended their appreciation that a pharmacist outside of the store has been able to reach out to them and speak to them in detail about their medications, since the store pharmacists are so busy! Although I agree that the “work-from-home” space is relatively new and may require further regulations, I am optimistic that the Board will continue to strive towards the goals laid out in the California Board of Pharmacy Strategic Plan 2022-2026, specifically goals 3.2, 3.4, and 3.5. No matter where we are, “remote order entry” should continue in order to increase access and improve health outcomes for the public.

Thank you for your time.

Katherine V., Pharm.D.
Pharmacist, Centralized Services Site Operations

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