

**TESTIMONY OF JENNIFER HAWKS BLAND, CEO OF NEWYORKBIO
JOINT ASSEMBLY AND SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION BUDGET HEARING**

February 4, 2021

Assembly Ways & Means Chair Weinstein, Senate Finance Chair Krueger, and members of the Joint Higher Education Budget Committee. I thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony for your consideration as you begin to review proposals with respect to the Governor's proposed 2021 – 2022 New York State Budget, and in particular, to offer support for sections 3-4 of Part P of the Health and Mental Hygiene proposed executive budget (S.2507/A.3007).

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of NewYorkBIO, the state's leading life sciences trade organization. NewYorkBIO brings together over 250 of New York's bioscience companies, universities, research institutions, and others dedicated to advancing life science research and commercialization. The New York area is home to the largest and richest bioscience community in the world: among other assets, the region boasts over 60% of pharmaceutical national or global headquarters; supports more than 75,000 direct biotechnology jobs and graduates more life science PhDs than any other region in the US; is home to over 25% of the cancer clinical trials in the US; and lays claim to the world's largest concentration of academic medical centers.

NewYorkBIO strongly supports state policy initiatives that encourage the expansion of vaccine administration within the state. The COVID-19 pandemic, and the incredible work done to develop vaccines and therapeutics to combat the virus (including by New York-based Pfizer and Regeneron), has focused the public's attention how critical the distribution and administration of vaccines are for public health and welfare.

NewYorkBIO strongly supports sections 3-4 of Part P of the Health and Mental Hygiene proposed executive budget because it provides additional tools to provide access to vaccines to the public. In particular, it expands the types of vaccines that pharmacists and certified nurse practitioners can administer to adults.

Over ten years ago, New York authorized pharmacists to administer a limited number of immunizations. Based upon the overwhelming success of this policy, the list of vaccines has grown to include influenza, pneumococcal, acute herpes zoster, meningococcal, tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. This budget proposal would expand that list to include critical immunizations for adults recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Center for Disease Control ("ACIP"). This would align New York with most other states that allow pharmacists to administer CDC adult recommended vaccines.

The diseases on the list include serious threats to public health such as anthrax, cholera, and smallpox. This expansion makes it easier and more convenient for New Yorkers to receive important immunizations. This can be especially important for adults who do not regularly visit a primary care physician.

For example, this legislation would allow pharmacists to administer vaccines for both Hepatitis A & B. In 2019 New York had a 235% increase in hepatitis A virus cases outside of New York City, compared to 2016-2018. Adding thousands of potential administration sites could significantly help to control the spread of hepatitis A and similar diseases. This would be

especially strategic because many in the high-risk populations for those diseases do not have access to traditional healthcare.

It is for these reasons that NewYorkBIO strongly supports this budget proposal. If you have further questions regarding this issue, please contact me via email at

Jennifer.Bland@newyorkbio.org