



NEIGHBORHOOD PHARMACY

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Testimony of Dr. Kisha Christian, Pharm.D.

Nominee for the Virgin Islands Board of Pharmacy

Good morning, Honorable President Milton E. Potter, distinguished members of the 36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands, members of the Committee, Governor Albert Bryan Jr., family, friends, and fellow Virgin Islanders.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is truly an honor and a privilege to be considered for appointment to the Virgin Islands Board of Pharmacy.

My name is Dr. Kisha Christian, and I stand before you today as a proud daughter of St. Croix, a pharmacist, entrepreneur, healthcare advocate, mentor, and servant leader. Most importantly, I stand before you as someone whose life's mission has been to improve the health and well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands.

I was born and raised on the island of St. Croix, the younger of two children born to Charles "Charlo" and Kathleen Christian. I attended Charles H. Emmanuel School, John H. Woodson Junior High School, Arthur A. Richards Junior High School, and St. Croix Central High School before transferring to St. Joseph Episcopal School, where I graduated in 1994.

People often ask me why I chose pharmacy.

The answer began when I was a little girl.

I often visited my cousin's father, Mr. Angel LeBron, at Nisky Center Pharmacy. Watching him own and operate his pharmacy left an impression on me that has stayed with me throughout my life. At that age, I didn't fully understand everything pharmacists did, but I understood that he was making a difference in people's lives. Seeing someone from our community who owned a pharmacy planted a seed that one day I could do the same.

That experience taught me something I still believe today: representation matters. Sometimes all it takes is seeing someone who looks like you serving others to believe that you can one day serve others too.

As I grew older, that dream became even clearer.

Through the Department of Health Summer Employment Program, I had the opportunity to work at Golden Rock Pharmacy, where I experienced community pharmacy firsthand. I also worked in the pharmacy department at Juan F. Luis Hospital. Those two experiences exposed me to both community and hospital pharmacy and confirmed what had begun years earlier.

I saw pharmacists doing far more than dispensing medications. They educated patients, collaborated with physicians and nurses, solved medication-related problems, and became trusted members of the healthcare team. That was the moment I knew pharmacy wasn't simply the profession I wanted it was my calling.

I went on to attend the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy, where I earned my Doctor of Pharmacy degree in 2004.

My journey through pharmacy school was one of the most rewarding and one of the most challenging chapters of my life. When I entered pharmacy school, I was already the mother of my oldest daughter. During my second year of pharmacy school, I welcomed my second daughter into the world. Throughout those years, I worked at both Target Pharmacy and Kaiser Permanente while balancing the demands of pharmacy school, raising my young family, and pursuing my dream.

There were many long days and even longer nights, but those experiences taught me resilience, discipline, perseverance, and faith. Looking back, I realize I wasn't just earning a pharmacy degree I was showing my daughters that with hard work, determination, and God's grace, no dream is beyond reach.

After earning my Doctor of Pharmacy degree, I accepted a full-time position with Target Pharmacy, where I was promoted to Pharmacy Manager within just three months. During my sixteen years in corporate pharmacy leadership, I led high-performing teams, expanded pharmacy services, implemented patient-centered programs, mentored future leaders, and learned the value of operational excellence, accountability, and servant leadership.

Although I built a successful career in Georgia, my heart always remained in the Virgin Islands.

In 2011, I made the decision to return home.

Coming home wasn't simply about opening a business. It was about fulfilling a promise I had made to myself as a young girl that one day I would return to serve the community that inspired me to become a pharmacist.

In late 2015, I fulfilled another lifelong dream by opening Neighborhood Pharmacy.

Neighborhood Pharmacy was founded on one simple principle: people come first.

Since opening our doors, we have built much more than a pharmacy. We have created a healthcare destination that provides medication therapy management, immunizations, medication synchronization, durable medical equipment, chronic disease management, patient education, and compassionate, personalized care.

Our commitment extends well beyond our walls. Through our Junior Pharmacist Program, we inspire young people to pursue careers in healthcare because I know firsthand how important representation can be. Through our annual backpack giveaway, health education initiatives, and more than \$60,000 in annual sponsorships to nonprofit organizations each year, we continue investing in the future of the Virgin Islands.

Everything we do is guided by our mission:

“Changing Healthcare in the Virgin Islands, One Patient at a Time.”

Throughout my career, I have been humbled to receive several honors. The one that has meant the most to me is the Cardinal Health Ken Wurster Community Leadership Award, because it recognized service to the community the very reason I became a pharmacist. I was honored to become the first pharmacist from the United States Virgin Islands to receive this national recognition.

I have also been grateful to receive Target Corporation’s Pharmacist of the Year Award, the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award, and the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year Award. Each of these honors reflects not my work alone, but the work of the many people who have supported me and served alongside me throughout my career.

As part of the Ken Wurster Award, Cardinal Health contributed \$10,000 to the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy in my honor. I chose to add an additional \$15,000 to establish the Kisha Christian Foundation Scholarship, creating a \$25,000 endowed scholarship. The scholarship supports minority pharmacy students who demonstrate leadership, academic achievement, community involvement, and a passion for serving others. My hope is that this scholarship will continue opening doors for future pharmacists and community leaders for many years to come.

While I am grateful for every recognition I have received, my greatest accomplishment has never been an award. It has been earning the trust of my patients, investing in future leaders, mentoring people from all walks of life, and making a lasting difference in my community.

Mentorship is one of my greatest passions. Whether I am mentoring aspiring pharmacists, students, entrepreneurs, business owners, or anyone striving to reach their full potential, I believe leadership comes with a responsibility to lift others as we climb.

I also remain active in our community and use social media to educate the public because I believe informed communities become healthier communities. I am currently working to establish a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving healthcare access and health education throughout the Virgin Islands.

I am a proud mother of three amazing daughters and an incredibly proud grandmother. My family reminds me every day why this work matters. The decisions we make today help shape the future our children and grandchildren will inherit tomorrow.

Several years ago, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. honored me by asking me to serve on two important boards: the Virgin Islands Board of Pharmacy and the G.E.S.C Health and Insurance Board.

It was a tremendous honor to be considered for both appointments. At that time, however, Neighborhood Pharmacy was still in its early years, and I was fully immersed in building the strong foundation that I envisioned for the organization. I understood that I could not responsibly give both appointments the time, attention, and commitment they deserved.

After careful consideration, I accepted the appointment to the GESC Health and Insurance Board while focusing on building Neighborhood Pharmacy into a sustainable organization that could one day operate independently of my daily involvement.

Looking back, I believe that was the right decision.

Over the past decade, I have intentionally built Neighborhood Pharmacy through strong leadership, standardized operating procedures, technology, accountability, and an exceptional management team. My focus has always been on creating systems that would allow the organization to thrive beyond any one individual.

Today, because of those intentional investments, Neighborhood Pharmacy operates with a level of independence that has given me the time and capacity to once again answer the call to public service.

When the opportunity arose to be considered for the Board of Pharmacy, I knew the time was right. I reached out to Governor Bryan to express my interest because I now can fully dedicate myself to the important work of the Board and to serving the people of the Virgin Islands in this new capacity.

Before I share my vision for the Board, I want to address directly a question I know may be on your minds. I am the owner of Neighborhood Pharmacy, and I am seeking a seat on the very Board that regulates pharmacies here in the Territory. I do not shy away from that fact. In truth, I believe it is one of the strengths I bring to this Board.

Owning and operating a pharmacy for the past decade has given me a firsthand understanding of the realities that pharmacists and pharmacy owners face every day the regulatory requirements, the staffing challenges, and the responsibility of caring for patients while running a compliant and accountable business. That is a perspective a regulatory board should have at the table.

At the same time, I take the responsibility that comes with it seriously. If confirmed, I commit to the highest standards of ethics and transparency. I will recuse myself from any matter that presents a conflict of interest, or even the appearance of one, including any matter that directly affects my own business or its competitors. I will follow both the letter and the spirit of the Territory's ethics laws and the Board's own rules. My private interests will never come before my duty to the public. On this Board, the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the Virgin Islands will always come first.

If confirmed, I will serve with humility, integrity, transparency, and an unwavering commitment to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the Virgin Islands.

My vision is to help modernize pharmacy practice throughout our Territory while ensuring that patient safety remains at the center of every decision we make.

One of my highest priorities is to help our pharmacists practice at the top of their education, training, and licensure. Today's pharmacists earn a Doctor of Pharmacy degree and are among the most highly trained and most accessible healthcare professionals in any community. Yet too often, outdated statutes and regulations limit them to only a fraction of what they are qualified to do. When we allow pharmacists to practice to the full extent of their training, we expand access to care, we ease the burden on our physicians and our hospitals, and we meet patients where they already are in their own neighborhoods.

To that end, I would like to work with this Legislature and my fellow Board members to establish a territory-wide standard for point-of-care testing and travel vaccinations. In many communities across the nation, a patient with symptoms of the flu, strep throat, COVID-19, or another common condition can walk into their local pharmacy, be tested, and, where appropriate, be treated all in a single visit, without ever needing to go to an emergency room or wait days for an appointment. Travel vaccinations are another area where pharmacists can safely and conveniently serve our residents. Building these standards into our pharmacy practice would help close a healthcare gap in our Territory, reduce unnecessary hospital and emergency room visits, and bring timely, affordable care closer to the people who need it.

I am also deeply mindful of the workforce and access challenges we face here in the Virgin Islands. Like many rural and island communities, we struggle to recruit and retain healthcare professionals, and too many of our residents, face real barriers to accessing care. Pharmacists

are often the most accessible healthcare providers in these communities, and a modern, well-supported pharmacy workforce is one of our best tools for closing that gap. As a Board member, I would work to create and support policies that strengthen our pharmacy workforce and expand access to care for every Virgin Islander, no matter which island they call home or how far they live from a hospital.

I look forward to working collaboratively with this Legislature, the Department of Health, the Office of the Attorney General, healthcare professionals, pharmacists, and my fellow Board members to review and strengthen our pharmacy statutes and regulations so they reflect current standards of practice while meeting the unique needs of the Virgin Islands.

I also hope to advocate for a dedicated line-item appropriation for the Board of Pharmacy. A Board charged with protecting the public should have the resources necessary to fulfill that responsibility effectively. Dedicated funding would strengthen inspections, modernize regulations, improve technology, support continuing education, and provide the administrative resources needed to move pharmacy practice forward in our Territory.

Throughout my career, whether caring for patients, mentoring future leaders, inspiring children, advocating for better healthcare, or serving my community my purpose has remained the same:

To build a healthier, stronger Virgin Islands, and to open doors for those who will come after me.

Leadership has never been about position.

It has always been about service.

If confirmed, I promise to listen thoughtfully, lead with integrity, make decisions grounded in the law, guided by evidence, and always focus on what is in the best interest of the people of the Virgin Islands.

It would be one of the greatest honors to serve this Territory as a member of the Virgin Islands Board of Pharmacy.

Thank you to Governor Bryan for your confidence in my nomination.

Thank you to the members of the 36th Legislature for your service, your leadership, and your thoughtful consideration.

I respectfully ask for your support and confirmation.

Thank you, and may God continue to bless the United States Virgin Islands.