



House Health and Human Services Committee

January 17, 2018

HB 1457 Relative to drug take back programs

Testimony

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Kathy Bizarro-Thunberg and I am the Executive Vice President with the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA), representing all 26 of the state's community hospitals as well as all of our specialty hospitals.

The New Hampshire Hospital Association is opposed to HB 1457. In addition to law enforcement agencies, hospitals have recently begun to create drug-take back programs for their patients and members of their communities. These are only designed for prescription and non-prescription drugs, not illicit drugs.

Pharmacists, in collaboration with clinical and security staff in their hospitals, have strict policies about how they handle the returned drugs and dispose of them. Pharmacists are prohibited, by their professional license, to handle drugs that are categorized as Class I drugs, which includes illicit drugs.

This bill also raises questions for us:

1. The language does not distinguish between law enforcement locations and healthcare locations for drug-take back programs. Would every program in the state be required to take illicit drugs?
2. If not applicable at all locations, how would someone distinguish between which take back program accepts illicit drugs and which ones don't?

If this is required, hospitals would have to seriously consider whether they would continue to provide their drug take back programs as a community resource, which takes unused/expired prescription medicine getting it out of the hands of people who could otherwise become addicted or use them illegally.

Having drug take back programs accessible at hospitals can also be a much more convenient and less intimidating place to be disposing unused prescriptions than a law enforcement facility.

The New Hampshire Hospital Association is opposed to HB 1457 and asks the committee to vote it inexpedient to legislate. I appreciate the opportunity to share our comments with you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.