



SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

January 21, 2020

SB 547 – Relative to An Electronic Prescription Drug Program

Testimony

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

There is a similar bill to SB 547 that has been filed in the House, HB 1332, sponsored by Rep. Gary Merchant, that contains language that was vetted by a stakeholder group, including NHHA, over the past several months. HB 1332 represents the collective voice of both prescribers and dispensers. It appears that both SB 547 and HB 1332 started with similar national language, but HB 1332, as introduced, includes the final recommendations by the stakeholder group. HB 1332 includes fewer options for exclusions from electronic prescribing, includes a limited time waiver process and will include rulemaking provisions for licensing boards and a specific effective date.

I want to make it clear to this committee that the hospitals in New Hampshire are supportive of requiring electronic prescribing for controlled substances. The reasons for moving to electronic prescribing for controlled substances are compelling, including:

- Enhances the safety and quality of the prescribing process
- Reduces prescription drug errors
- Supports clinical decision making
- Notifies clinicians of allergies, drug interactions, duplicate medications and other clinical alerts
- Monitors how many controlled prescriptions a patient has received
- Enhances communication between prescribers and dispensers
- Reduces theft and increases security

In fact, many hospitals have already implemented electronic prescribing for controlled substances. Several others are in the midst of their implementation and the rest have plans for implementation within the next year.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. We ask that a discussion regarding the two bills, SB 547 and HB 1332, takes place to ensure that they are identical. I am happy to answer any questions.