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Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Estates and Trusts

Health Facilities and Occupations



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 170 Cancer Drugs – Physician Dispensing and Coverage

Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair and esteemed members of the Health and Government Operation Committee,

HB 170 increases patient access to mail order and specialty drugs by removing any legal barriers to physician dispensing. There are times when Pharmacy Benefit Managers cannot reach patients and then patient medication is delayed. This legislation seeks to eliminate these delays and allow patients to receive oncology medication more directly from their physician.

In 48 of the nation's 50 states, physician dispensing is broadly legal, although regulations that cover physician dispensing vary from state to state. In Maryland, physicians are required to obtain a dispensing permit from the Maryland Board of Physicians for a fee and display the permit where prescriptions are administered.

A comprehensive record of prescriptions administered must be added to the patient's chart when the drug is administered. All drugs must be labelled clearly with dosage and instructions as well as the name of the dispensing physician, address, and contact information for the practice. Finally, physicians must participate in customized, continuing education on dispensing and their practice must submit to inspections. These requirements mitigate any possible problems with physician dispensing by creating a system of checks and balances.

According to the Journal of General Internal Medicine, between 28 to 31% of new prescriptions are never filled. Further, 50% of patients do not take their medications as prescribed. There are a variety of reasons for non-adherence from language barriers to lack of financial resources. Physicians are able to improve adherence rates when they dispense in their office and can mail refills directly to patients.

The Community Oncology Alliance issued an extensive position statement on in-office dispensing, noting that "in broad terms, in-office dispensing can provide better patient care and outcomes, at a lower cost, through a more clinically integrated and streamlined process."

For these reasons, I urge you to support **HB 170**, and I request a favorable report.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue shadow effect behind the text.

Delegate Karen Lewis Young