

SUMMARY

I. Overview of the Bill

Included in this folder are the public documents relating to the Collaborative Drug Therapy Management bill proposed by Senator Moore in 2007 (S.420). Senator Moore refilled the bill in 2008 (S.2706). The bill became a law in 2008 in chapter 528 of the Acts of 2008. The legislation authorizes pharmacists to engage in collaborative drug therapy management under the supervision and direction of a physician. Participation in a collaborative drug therapy management program is strictly voluntary. The concept is that the pharmacists and physicians will collaborate to provide optimal patient outcomes through appropriate medication use and enhanced patient care services. Improvement in patient outcomes is observed because the collaboration of health care providers ensures that patients are more likely to take their medicines, and take them correctly. Moreover, if both physicians and pharmacists monitor a patient's reaction to a particular drug therapy, they are more likely to detect any problems. This will save lives and costs. Prior to Massachusetts' enactment of Collaborative Drug Therapy Management, 43 states had similar programs and had proven them to be effective.

II. Where I Looked

To collect a thorough packet of documents, I began with the committees who heard the bill. At first this proved unsuccessful. The committee of Elder Affairs only had a bill summary and no other information. Health Care Financing claimed that they only had a copy of the bill in its final version. I then learned an important lesson regarding the state house, you must know who to ask and can't just assume you will be directed to the right person. A research analyst in the public health committee connected me to a research analyst in health care financing, this individual was able to locate whatever testimony and press releases they had. Unfortunately, my contact at elder affairs never responded to my emails or phone call. I also visited House Counsel, House Ways and Means, Senate Ways and Means, Senate Ethics and Rules, Senate Clerk, Library, Senate Ethics and Rules, and the Governors' office. No one had anything I was looking for. The most helpful office turned out to be Senator Moore, who proposed the bill. I also collected the Legislative package from the State Publications and Regulations Division. As for internet files I collected any reference to drug therapy in State House News, Senate Journal, House Journal, and the media in general. Representative Koutoujian did propose an identical bill, but my research focused on the bill proposed by Senator Moore.

III. What I found

The bill was rather uncontested. There are short mentions of the bill being engrossed or an amendment suggested and added, but no record of floor debate in the State House News, or journals. Positive testimony was submitted in writing from doctors and pharmacists. All agreeing that Collaborative Drug Therapy Management can save lives and money. Patients are better served when their pharmacists and physicians work together to monitor and treat them. Some negative testimony was submitted by the Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians and the Massachusetts Medical Society. Their main complaint was that according to the text of the bill a pharmacist could enter into an agreement with a supervising physician who may have never seen the patient. Additionally, the physicians were concerned about the pharmacists' freedom to initiate, monitor, or modify a patient's drug therapy. Nevertheless, the bill became law in 2008 and regulations are currently being drafted in accordance with the statute.