

Public Health Committee Testimony: March 1, 2010

Re: SB 262 – An Act Concerning Collaborative Drug Therapy Management Agreements

Dear Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Michael Li and I am from Cheshire, CT. I am a student at the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy and I am providing testimony in support of SB262, An Act Concerning Collaborative Drug Therapy Management Agreements.

This upcoming May, I will be graduating from the University of Connecticut with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. After graduation, I would like to remain in my home state of Connecticut but will be leaving for the west coast due to opportunities in pharmacy practice. Comparatively, the realm of practice of a pharmacist in the state of Connecticut is greatly limited as compared with most other states due to a restrictive practice environment. In many states, pharmacists and physicians have been working together for over 30 years under collaborative practice agreements which, following physician's diagnosis, would enable the pharmacist to initiate therapy, order labs, change dosing and monitor therapy. In this way, physicians and pharmacists are able to work together as a team in order to minimize cost while providing the best care for the patient.

My classmates and I find it discouraging that if we were to remain within Connecticut, we would be unable to serve patients in a manner that has become the standard of practice for pharmacy. Furthermore, after six years of pharmacy school, we also are disheartened to be unable to fully utilize the knowledge and practice capabilities which the Doctor of Pharmacy degree confers simply because Connecticut does not allow innovative practice opportunities, such as collaborative practice agreements. I feel that preventing the expansion of collaborative practice authority would not only cause new graduates to leave Connecticut but will also hinder Connecticut's ability to provide what has become the standard of care.

Conversely, as a resident with family in Connecticut, I also worry about Connecticut's ability to attract out-of-state pharmacy graduates and pharmacists. After graduation, pharmacy students have the option of applying for post-doc residency programs to further their clinical training. Without collaborative practice agreements in place, residency programs within Connecticut are unable to meet the expectations of practice. The same is true of pharmacists wanting to move their practice to Connecticut; without collaborative practice agreements, it would be like moving backwards rather than forwards.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your consideration of future practitioner concerns with regard to expansion of collaborative practice authority for pharmacists within the state of Connecticut.

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