



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 15, 2013

Jewel Mullen MD, MPH, MPA, Commissioner, (860)509-7101

House Bill 6522 - An Act Concerning the Availability And Use Of Certain Devices To Administer Antiepileptic Medication

The Department of Public Health opposes House Bill 6522, which would require that hospitals, outpatient surgical facilities, outpatient clinics and ambulance or rescue vehicles maintain a diazepam (valium) antiepileptic delivery device. The bill would also require that employees who provide direct health care services are trained by a qualified, licensed health care provider in the use of this device.

While the bill indicates that staff be trained in the use of the device, it does not indicate when and why the device would be used or who would be conducting the assessment for the need of such medication. Statutes direct who may assess patients and/or administer medications, and not all health care services employees have that statutorily defined scope of practice. Paramedic services presently cover all of the state and provide anti-epileptic medications when appropriate. These medications are not indicated unless the seizure is prolonged or repetitive with no intervening level of consciousness. Other causes of seizures must also be ruled out before considering the use of diazepam.

Implementation of this legislation would require significant training. DEA and State drug control regulations would make this logistically onerous and costly. Ambulance services would need to obtain DEA and State Drug Control Authorizations. This would be especially difficult for volunteer services, in which different crews staff the ambulance in the same shift and staff responds from areas outside the building. These services would need to purchase expensive, computer-controlled locking units that could track individuals who have accessed the controlled substances. Furthermore, the provisions of this bill are outside the National EMT scope of practice that the state is attempting to adopt to standardize pre-hospital care.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

*Phone: (860) 509-7269, Fax: (860) 509-7100
Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE
P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
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