



MIKE ROHRKASTE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 55TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bill 608 November 29, 2017

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of Assembly Bill 608.

AB 608 is a simple bill that allows pharmacy technicians to provide services that fall within the practice of pharmacy if they do so under the direction, supervision, and inspection of licensed pharmacists, subject to rules promulgated by the Pharmacy Examining Board. The “practice of pharmacy” includes even such basic tasks as counting pills and labeling bottles, many of which are already performed by pharmacy technicians. AB 608 will ensure that state law reflects common practices.

AB 608 will also allow pharmacy technicians, as well as pharmacy students who have completed at least two years of pharmacy studies and pharmacists who are licensed in other states and have pending applications for Wisconsin licensure, to engage in remote dispensing at certain locations, including nursing homes and correctional facilities.

Sen. Jerry Petrowski and I, joined by Rep. Deb Kolste and Sen. Jon Erpenbach, introduced AB 608 in consultation with the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin. The legislation recognizes common practices that allow pharmacists to make more effective use of their staff and other resources. This legislation also expands practical learning opportunities for eligible pharmacy students. AB 608 has bipartisan support in both the Assembly and the Senate.

Thank you for your consideration. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



One Voice. One Vision.

Date: November 29, 2017

To: Representative Joe Sanfelippo, Chairman
Members, Assembly Committee on Health

From: Danielle M. Womack, MPH
Director, Public Affairs, Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin

RE: Testimony in Favor of Assembly Bill 608

On behalf of the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin's nearly 4,000 individual members and nearly 600 pharmacy business members, I would like to formally register support of Assembly Bill 608.

Pharmacy technicians play a crucial role in pharmacy operations, assisting licensed pharmacists in dispensing, compounding, and delivering medications to patients. Without pharmacy technicians, pharmacies would struggle to provide high-quality, comprehensive care to patients throughout Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, pharmacy technicians work under licensed pharmacists – technicians are not independently licensed. Administrative rules were promulgated by the Pharmacy Examining Board in 2001 that delineates what a pharmacy technician can and cannot do under the supervision of a pharmacist. At a Pharmacy Examining Board meeting earlier this year, the Department of Safety and Professional Services legal counsel raised concerns that pharmacists do not have explicit statutory authority to delegate to an unlicensed individual, such as a pharmacy technician. This lack of statutory authority has led to confusion amongst pharmacists as to whether or not they are legally allowed to delegate to pharmacy technicians, as well as whether or not the administrative rules are enforceable.

Assembly Bill 608 simply clarifies that pharmacists can delegate the “practice of pharmacy” to unlicensed individuals and that the Pharmacy Examining Board has the authority to write rules relating to this delegation. The bill uses similar language as delegation authority for other healthcare providers and requires that unlicensed persons to whom the practice of pharmacy is delegated must be directed, supervised, and inspected by the delegating pharmacist. This bill will allow pharmacy technicians to continue operating as they have been for decades – it does not expand what pharmacists are currently delegating to pharmacy technicians under the administrative rules.

If this legislation is not enacted, we have significant concerns that pharmacies will be forced to either limit the services a pharmacy is able to provide, which would be harmful to patients, or require licensed pharmacists to complete all of the acts presently delegated to pharmacy technicians, which would have a large economic impact on pharmacies and hospitals. As such, we encourage you to support this legislation.

Thank you.

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Health

FROM: Joyce Wang

DATE: November 29, 2017

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 608

Thank you, members of the Assembly Committee on Health, for allowing me to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 608. My name is Joyce Wang and I am a pharmacy technician at a pharmacy here in Madison.

As a pharmacy technician, my responsibilities include inputting prescription information, selecting the appropriate medication from the shelf, counting out the number of individual units prescribed, placing it into a container, and affixing a label. I also resolve insurance issues, fill medication boxes, place prescriptions checked by the pharmacist into bags for delivery, and carry out the financial transaction when the patient picks up the medication.

In Wisconsin, pharmacy technicians are not licensed and are not able to practice without the supervision of a licensed pharmacist. Pharmacy technicians are delegated tasks by a pharmacist, the specifics of what can and cannot be delegated being found in administrative rules that were written more than fifteen years ago. Despite these rules being on the books for some time, allowing pharmacists to delegate certain acts to pharmacy technicians, the Department of Safety and Professional Services has recently reported that, unlike many healthcare providers, pharmacists do not have specific legal authority to delegate to someone who is not a licensed pharmacist.

This bill seeks to solve this problem by making it clear that a pharmacist can delegate the "practice of pharmacy" to unlicensed people and gives the Pharmacy Examining Board clear authority to write rules relating to this delegation. In practice, this bill will allow pharmacy technicians to continue practicing as they have been for many years, under the supervision of a pharmacist. This bill does not create an additional license or any other requirements that a person must meet to become a pharmacy technician.

I support this legislation which makes it clear that pharmacy technicians can continue operating as they have been for many years, playing a crucial role in pharmacy operations and helping to ensure patients safely receive their medications.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify on this legislation.