



Electronic Prescribing of Controlled Substances
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
Friday, March 22nd, 2019

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, my name is Tonya McClain, I am a Market Health and Wellness Director for Walmart here in the state of Kansas. The stores I oversee are in the greater Wichita, KS area. I have been a pharmacist in Kansas for 17 years.

I am here today on behalf of Walmart in support of Senate Bill 234 an electronic prescribing of opioid prescription drugs bill.

The health and safety of our patients is a critical priority; that's why we're taking an active role in the fight against our nation's opioid issue – one that has affected so many families and communities across America.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, as you know, our communities in Kansas and those across the nation, are experiencing a crisis of opioid abuse.

More than two million Americans suffer from substance abuse disorders related to prescription opioids. More than 17,000 Americans died in 2017 alone from prescription opioid overdoses. And since 1999, almost half a million Americans have died from an overdose involving opioids.

Kansas is not immune to this national epidemic. In 2016, 146 people died in Kansas from opioid-related overdoses.

The bill before you requires prescriptions issued for a controlled substance in schedule II-IV that contain opioids to be transmitted electronically starting 2021 and outlines some possible exemptions for prescribers. The bill's date coincides with legislation passed by Congress mandating electronic prescribing for controlled substances covered by Medicare Part D.

The bill is a product of a detailed and collaborative effort with the Kansas Medical Society, Kansas State Board of Pharmacy, Kansas Pharmacist Association, and the Kansas Pharmacy Retail Association, which resulted in the language you see before you today. We appreciate the work and time of the interested parties to come up with a positive solution to help address the opioid epidemic.

What is E-prescribing? E-prescribing requires medical providers to send prescriptions directly to pharmacies electronically, instead of providing patients with handwritten prescriptions, faxing prescriptions to pharmacies, or calling in prescriptions. The American Medical Association, the American Association of Family Physicians, and the American College of Physicians recommend e-prescribing as one of the top ways to combat opioid abuse.

According to the National Academy of Medicine, e-prescribing has been shown to reduce medication errors and limit fraud. E-prescribing can also help inform and improve prescribing decisions, helping to reduce overprescribing and overuse.

As previously mentioned, Congress has passed legislation mandating electronic prescribing for controlled substances covered by Medicare Part D starting in 2021 and has discussed implementing a similar requirement in the Medicaid program. But these measures would still leave a significant gap – all the prescriptions that aren't covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

By requiring that all Kansas-based medical providers electronically prescribe opioids, Kansas can take an important step to close the gap and help take unnecessary or fraudulently obtained prescriptions out of circulation.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on this important topic. I urge your support of Senate Bill 234.

Thank you,

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