

HB 725 – Tobacco Cessation

Proposes to allow pharmacists to prescribe any tobacco cessation product approved by the FDA

- House Bill 725 was heard in the House Health and Mental Health Committee this past Monday. It may come up for a vote on Monday, March 11.
- Currently, pharmacists can counsel customers on tobacco cessation and sell OTC nicotine-replacement therapies such as patches, lozenges, and gum.
- Other nicotine-replacement therapies, such as nasal sprays and oral inhalers, are only available by prescription. **Under the bill, pharmacists would be able to prescribe these products.**
- In addition to nicotine-replacement therapies, the FDA has also approved two drugs (Chantix and Zyban) for tobacco cessation. **Under the bill, pharmacists would be able to prescribe these products.**
- MSMA opposes pharmacist prescribing. Pharmacists do not perform physical exams, nor do they know the patient’s history or health details as well as the prescribing physician.
- Chantix and Zyban are particularly problematic. Despite having the “black box” warning removed from them in 2016, these drugs are still known to cause neuropsychiatric symptoms in patients, especially patients with underlying mental health disorders (of which a pharmacist will likely be unaware). Side effects from these drugs can include depression, hallucinations, and suicidal and homicidal impulses. When such adverse effects have been reported with a medication, it is important that physician are involved and available to patients if a change of treatment is needed.
- The chairman and vice-chairman of the committee are pharmacists.

Please contact the House Health and Mental Health Committee and let them know your feelings on this issue. The members of the committee and their contact information can be found below:

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