



Testimony of Patricia Kelleher
Executive Director, Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts
Before Joint Committee on Public Health
On
Senate Bill 812

An Act to Ensure the Availability of Medications in Time of an Emergency

Chairwoman Fargo, Chairman Sanchez, and Members of the Joint Committee on Public Health, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 812, *An Act to Ensure the Availability of Medications in Time of an Emergency*. This legislation would make certain that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health would have an established plan in the event of a declared emergency so that citizens would be able to obtain medication on which they depend.

As advocates for and representatives of the home health industry, we know first hand how important prescription medications are and how difficult it could be to obtain emergency supplies. If home health patients need to be evacuated to an emergency shelter in a time of crisis, there would be in virtually every case at least one prescription drug that would have to accompany them.

This bill states that the plan DPH will implement includes provisions for insurance coverage for replacement of prescription medication lost or destroyed during the emergency and prescriptions that have expired. This is essential for the ensured safety of the elderly and infirm in the event of a disaster and would be of utmost importance for many home health patients.

The Home Care Alliance would like to take this opportunity to also offer an addition to this legislation. To prepare for an emergency, people are instructed to have at the ready a “grab and go” bag, which is a short list of basic essentials. As a further preparative measure, we suggest that home health patients and others who depend on prescription drug medication be granted, upon request, a few days of extra medication to be kept for a “grab and go” bag or kit.

We hope the committee will look favorably upon this bill, which is an excellent measure to establish readiness in the event of an emergency. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation and of our suggestion.

Patricia Kelleher
Executive Director
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