



JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
JULY 28, 2009
TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE 2080

Good morning Madam Chair and Mr Chairman, I am Theo Manschreck, MD President of the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society.

On behalf of the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society I would like to register our strongest opposition to House 2080 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A BOARD OF REGISTRATION IN MIDWIFERY being heard before this committee today.

Physicians have a long and traditional history of collaborative work with other health care and mental health professional in both clinical and non clinical endeavors. House 2080 goes too far. This legislation as presented for your consideration virtually allows a lay person to practice medicine. In our opinion, this legislation allows for the prescribing of medication including controlled substances with no supervision by a physician. It does not include critical safeguards such as the use of prescription pads or e-prescribing that other legislation will be required of licensed physicians in the Commonwealth. Since midwife practice frequently occurs outside the traditional health care setting, perhaps for instance as home births; stronger not weaker safeguards need to be implemented. Physician offices are moving to e-prescribing a form of providing prescriptions that provides substantial protection for the patient with respect to doses, directions, interactions, detection of allergies, and possible errors. Yet this bill will allow individuals essentially untrained in medicine a free hand at prescription writing without such safeguards or the appropriate training to prescribe in the first place.

As currently drafted, this bill allows several licensure categories, some that require little medical training. In addition to prescribing drugs HOUSE 2080 allows for the ordering and interpretation of tests, including genetic testing. It also allows for interpretation of genetic testing and other tests with no medical review or oversight. The tests and their results might have a major and disastrous impact on mother, family and even fetus if ordered and interpreted without the necessary education or expertise. It also allows surgical (gynecological) interventions and apparently taking on the primary medical caretaker role for the mother and baby without medical training. This is totally inappropriate.

This bill should not pass; this is not in the best interest of a mother to be. A graduate of medical school is not allowed to perform the tasks we are discussing without advanced, supervised training yet this bill allows a lay person with limited training to perform them.

We request, in the strongest possible terms that House 2080 be given an ought not to pass report. Thank you for your consideration.