Lansing testimony

My name is Diane Rutkowski, (Assistant Director of Pharmacy Royal Oak); with me is Dorothy Bernard, (Director of Nursing Royal Oak)

On behalf of the Beaumont Health System, we are here to support House Bill 5131 because it will improve care to patients who are discharged from a hospital to a nursing home or other extended care facility.

We were part of a process improvement initiative at Beaumont to assess why some of our patients who were discharged to a nursing home were readmitted to the hospital within 24 hours of their discharge. Through our observation we discovered that there was a significant delay in patients getting their medications after the transfer occurred. The cause for the delay was that the pharmacy servicing the nursing home could not accept the discharge prescriptions written in the chart by the physician taking care of the patient while in the hospital. These orders would have to be faxed to the nursing home, input into the nursing home's computer system, signed by the nursing home physician and then faxed to the pharmacy.

Due to the fact that these pharmacies are off site and have limited delivery times, delays often resulted in patients not getting their medications for 24 hours. It was not unusual for some of these patients to be on more than 10 medications. These patients are usually frail, so missing a dose of heart medication, blood pressure medication, or antibiotic can have dire consequences and resulted in avoidable and costly hospital re-admissions. Some of these patients are also on pain medications, so a delay in receiving the medication caused unnecessary suffering for the patient and anxiety for their families.

House Bill 5131 will allow the nursing home to recognize the hospital physician's medication order as a valid prescription and order the medications without delay, improving the care they provide to patients and avoiding unnecessary hospital re-admissions.

We hope you will support this legislation.