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Health and Government Operations
Committee
Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long-Term Care

Public Health and
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HB241 State Board of Physicians - Dispensing Permits

Madame Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about House Bill 241.

Physicians in Maryland who wish to dispense pharmaceuticals from their office must apply for a physician dispensing permit. Two parties are responsible for distribution, oversight, and enforcement of standards related to these permits: the Maryland Board of Physicians, and the Office of Controlled Substances Administration (OCSA). The Board is responsible for setting requirements and standards for dispensing permits, as well as performing disciplinary action in response to infractions against those standards. OCSA is responsible for inspection of alleged infractions. Separating inspection, regulation, and disciplinary action between two agencies creates a haphazard, delay-prone process for enforcing dispensing permit standards. House Bill 241, which is in the same posture as it passed the House unanimously last year, proposes a solution to this issue.

House Bill 241 streamlines the process for enforcing standards for dispensing permits by transferring the ability to conduct inspections on permit holders from OCSA to the Board of Physicians. With this change, the Board will have the ability to set regulations, perform inspections related to those regulations, and conduct disciplinary action against dispensing permit holders violating regulations. OCSA will be removed from the inspections process, eliminating the need to send violations to their office before enforcement. This streamlined procedure will reduce administrative delays in the investigative process and expedite disciplinary action in a cost-effective manner.

This bill proposes a simple solution to a recurring problem: remove delays in dispensing permit enforcement by removing an unnecessary step in the process. I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 241.