

Oppose SB 445

On February 23rd, the Senate Public Health Committee passed SB 445 out of committee after making some minor amendments. SB 445 is a bill requested by EBMS, a full-service employee benefit management company located in Billings. MPA is opposed to SB 445 which if passed will authorize a medical practitioner to dispense drugs at employer-based onsite clinics pursuant to a written prescription from a medical practitioner. This bill has already passed the Senate on 2/26 (voting 36 to 14) and will be shortly heading to the House in which we will soon need your assistance.

This is the same bill we had to fight in the last 2007 session that was labeled SB397. Our legislators at that time listened to pharmacist testimonies and realized that this may endanger patient safety.

Bill Text for SB 445: <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/2009/billpdf/SB0445.pdf>

Reasons MPA Opposes SB 445:

- The typical patient uses multiple providers or specialists, and the risk of drug interactions could therefore be greatly enhanced. Not only does the bill fail to address a mechanism by which the patient's pharmacy could be alerted to new medications dispensed by a practitioner, but also no mechanism exists for multiple practitioners to share their dispensing information.
- The safety net of patient counseling does not exist in the provisions of this bill. SB445 does not even mandate that written material be given to the patient with regard to their medications.
- The patients we serve and strive to protect on a daily basis are also your constituents. They deserve to be protected by the series of checks and balances presently in place. SB445 would remove those checks and balances, essentially the safety net under our patients, and they simply deserve better.
- This may be a positive step toward EBMS's bottom line and it may save some patients time and money, but it is a step backwards for patient safety.