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# Assembly Commerce Committee

March 4, 2003

Testimony in support of AB144

By Nevada Women's Lobby

Presented by Bobbie Gang, Lobbyist

The Nevada Women's Lobby supports the amendment to SB144.

It seems unreasonable that a pharmacist would refuse to dispense a medication that has been prescribed for a patient by a licensed medical doctor. But it can happen because there is apparently no requirement for a pharmacist to fill each and every prescription presented, neither in their standards of practice nor in Nevada law.

SB144 is a form of conscience clause that has been provided for other health care professionals, health care facilities, and even for health insurance companies.

Nevada Women's Lobby would prefer to see that all prescriptions be filled. But the fact is that some pharmacists are refusing to dispense some medications because of the pharmacist's personal religious beliefs. Therefore, we support AB144 as a means of providing the service to the patient in the most expeditious manner. If a pharmacist will not fill the prescription, he or she should at the very least refer the patient to another pharmacist who will fill the prescription.

Try to imagine what you might feel if you were told that your prescription for a sensitive condition couldn't be filled.

I had a personal experience that was humiliating and it had nothing to do with a "sensitive" prescription regarding reproductive health. Yet, I felt that the question posed by a pharmacist was an invasion of my relationship with my doctor.

I handed my prescription for a sinus medication to the pharmacists who questioned what condition this was prescribed for. I was somewhat taken aback by the question. I had just come from my doctor's office; I was feeling very sick and my head hurt. He diagnosed my sinus condition and prescribed a medication. I didn't think the pharmacist should question what the prescription was for. All I wanted was to have my prescription filled so I could go home and go to bed! I told the pharmacist what it was for and he then told me that this was an expensive medication that could be used for a number of illnesses and in some cases a less expensive medication could be substituted. For my sinus condition, he said this was appropriate and he filled the prescription. I was annoyed but understood that he was just trying to help me by saving me money if he could.

However, I think I would have been enraged if the pharmacist told me that he or she couldn't fill a prescription because of his personal religious conviction.

Nevada Women's Lobby asks you to pass AB144 to ensure that all patients can have their prescriptions filled in a timely manner.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLY COMMERCE & LABOR

DATE: 3/10/03 ROOM: 4100 EXHIBIT L

SUBMITTED BY: Bobbie Gang