



Testimony in Support of SB 378,

Re: An Exemption from the Board of Registration of Medical Technicians

January 9, 2018

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I'm Gina Balkus, CEO of the Granite State Home Health Association, which advocates for home care agencies and the clients they serve. Home care agencies support SB 378, because it will clarify RSA 328-I so that workers in homes do not need to register as medical technicians.

It appears that the Legislative intent of this law was to increase oversight of certain unlicensed employees in health care facilities or medical establishments who may have direct access to patients and facility narcotics. Home care agencies – both medical and non-medical – are licensed as “facilities” under RSA 151, however services are provided in patients’ homes, not in a facility or medical establishment. Unlicensed workers who provide services in homes include non-medical personal care service providers, homemakers, social workers, hospice chaplains, and hospice volunteers. These workers may or may not have access to a patients’ narcotics, depending on where the patient stores their medications in their home.

Home care agencies take patient safety seriously. All home care and hospice agency staff and volunteers go through state criminal background checks, as required by law. All agencies have policies and procedures regarding medications and provide training about drug diversion. We also recommend to our clients that medications be stored in a locked location in the home. SB 378 clarifies that those workers who have already had background checks do not have to register as medical technicians, pay a fee and undergo a FBI check.

Without SB 378, thousands of workers -- mostly lower wage personal care providers – might have to go through a costly and time-consuming registration process and FBI check. I'm not even sure the state police could handle the surge of applications.

SB 378 would not exempt hospice houses, such as the Community Hospice House in Merrimack and the Hospice House here in Concord. I have reviewed RSA 328-I with these facility directors and they have no concerns about the law.

I urge you pass 378 to clarify the intent of RSA 328-I. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

