



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. Greg Ottenbreit, Chair
Yorkton

Mr. Cam Broten, Deputy Chair
Saskatoon Massey Place

Ms. Doreen Eagles
Estevan

Mr. Glen Hart
Last Mountain-Touchwood

Ms. Judy Junor
Saskatoon Eastview

Hon. Jim Reiter
Rosetown-Elrose

Ms. Joceline Schriemer
Saskatoon Sutherland

[The committee met at 21:00.]

The Chair: — Before we continue, I'd like to introduce the members. Tonight we have, substituting for Mr. Broten I believe, Mr. Taylor. And substituting for Ms. Junor is Mr. Yates. And on the government side, we have committee members, Ms. Schriemer, Ms. Eagles, Minister Reiter, and Mr. Hart will be joining us shortly.

Bill No. 135 — *The Prescription Drugs Amendment Act, 2009*

Clause 1

The Chair: — Committee members, earlier today the Assembly referred Bill No. 135, *The Prescription Drugs Amendment Act* to our committee. This is what we will now be considering. By practice, the committee normally holds general debate during consideration of clause 1.

Before we begin, I'll introduce the minister, and I ask him to introduce his officials. And I ask him for an opening comment. Minister McMorris.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to appear before the committee tonight to discuss Bill 135, *The Prescription Drugs Amendment Act*. My officials that I have with me tonight are, on my right hand side, Kevin Wilson, the executive director of the drug plan and extended benefits; Andrea Laturas, the senior pharmaceutical policy and information consultant, drug plan and extended benefits. And to my left is Duncan Fisher, assistant deputy minister or associate deputy minister. So they'll be here to help answer any questions that you may have.

I just have a brief statement, if you'll allow me to indulge, just a brief statement on this Act.

As you know, the amendments to *The Prescription Drugs Act* were introduced in the legislature in December 2009, and obtained second reading on March 2010. The amendments to *The Prescription Drugs Act* will require pharmacies to record the sale of non-prescription codeine products into the pharmaceutical information program. The pharmaceutical information program, better known as PIP, is a secure, web-based computer application that provides authorized health care professionals with fast and confidential access to medication histories to Saskatchewan patients.

Currently there is no centralized collection of information on sales of non-prescription codeine in the province, and there is a potential misuse of this product. We know that such drugs can be harmful if used inappropriately, and by introducing the amendments to the prescription drug Act, we are hoping to prevent abuse and misuse.

With patient safety in mind, the College of Pharmacists have expressed its support for a more effective way for pharmacies to monitor the sale of these drugs. However, because there is no central collection of information on sales of these products, it is challenging for pharmacies to verify potential inappropriate use. By recording the sale of non-prescription codeine in the patient medical profile of the PIP, the pharmaceutical information

program, we will have a tool to prevent misuse and enhance patient safety. We remain committed to improving patient safety in the province, and we believe that the proposed amendments will play an important role in that direction. Tonight I'm pleased to answer any questions that you may have on *The Prescription Drugs Amendment Act*, and I look forward to those questions. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McMorris. And I'd just ask officials, the first time you speak, if you could just introduce yourselves for the purposes of Hansard. And I'll open the floor to questions. Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I have only four questions. The first question: after consultation with the College of Pharmacists, they have indicated that, having not seen the regulations, they have been assured that the drugs linked in the regulations will be just those listed codeine products defined in federal regulation section 36 under the *Narcotic Control Regulations*. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Yes, that's correct. I mean the regulations haven't been drawn up, but that's the way it's moving, is only the prescribed drugs through the federal regulations.

Mr. Yates: — Okay, thank you very much. My second question has to do with . . . also as a result of consultations with the pharmacists, college of pharmacy. If any other drugs are added to the regulations, will there be advanced consultations prior to them being added?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Absolutely.

Mr. Yates: — Okay. Thank you very much. And now, Mr. Minister, just a couple other questions regarding personal health information. I think we're all aware of a recent misuse of the system and the breach of *The Privacy Act*. Mr. Minister, can we anticipate any changes as a result of that breach?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Although that doesn't completely apply to the Act, what we are looking at is the Privacy Commissioner's recommendations. And we are looking at following through on the ones that we feel that will make this Act and make the prescription drug information program stronger, following through on those recommendations. We've seen the recommendations put forward, and we're seeing how they will impact, talking and consulting with the professional groups to make sure that we only make the program stronger.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Another section, 3.3(4)(b), it says that personal health information collected, and it says, ". . . may be used . . . for any other purpose authorized by the regulations". Are there any other purposes that you're aware of that this will be used for? And if not, will there be prior consultations prior to any other uses being brought forward?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — I think what I'll do is I'll turn it over to Kevin Wilson to answer this, but I think the answers are going to be pretty straightforward.

Mr. Wilson: — At this point there aren't other uses that are contemplated. An example of what could be something at some point would be, for example, the precursors for methamphetamine.

Mr. Yates: — Okay, thank you very much. That concludes our questions.

The Chair: — Mr. Taylor, any questions?

Mr. Taylor: — My questions have all been asked by Mr. Yates. I'm fine, thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you. Seeing no more questions from the committee members, we'll go on to vote the Bill. Seeing none, no questions, clause 1, short title, *The Prescription Drugs Amendment Act*, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill 135, *The Prescription Drugs Amendment Act*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask that a member to make a motion that we now report Bill 135, *The Prescription Drugs Amendment Act* without amendment. Mr. Hart. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Well thank you, committee members, and thank you, Mr. Minister and officials, for coming out tonight. I'll invite the opposition to have any closing comments.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to thank the minister and his officials for coming out this evening and answering our questions on this piece of legislation. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you again, committee members. And Mr. Minister, your closing comments.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — I just would like to also echo those thoughts and thank Duncan, who maybe had a bit of a day at the dentist, so thank you for being here, and Kevin and Andrea for being here. And also the opposition for speedy passage of a Bill that I think is non-controversial. I think it's best for the province, so I thank the opposition for that.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your words. With that, I'll ask for a motion to adjourn today's committee meeting. Agreed and carried. Thank you and have a good night.

[The committee adjourned at 21:12.]