



To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Dr. Heather Bissen. I am a Veterinarian, and own Niagara Animal Hospital in Niagara, WI. My clinic is located just two miles from the Upper Peninsula of MI, the closest town being Iron Mountain, MI. I am licensed in the state of WI, but not in the state of MI. I also have a current Federal DEA license. I am hoping you will put a lot of consideration into this bill, as it directly affects not only my business, but also businesses in the state of MI.

This bill aims to correct problems with the prescription of controlled drugs called in to MI pharmacies from Veterinarians in other states. While most of the drugs I have prescribed, I have sent home with clients directly from the Animal Hospital, I have occasionally called in prescriptions to local pharmacies (Walmart, Walgreens, etc). These prescriptions have ranged from medications like Cephalexin for skin infections, to Phenobarbital for seizures. Phenobarbital is a controlled drug, requiring a DEA license to prescribe. It is also a medication that a pet may die without if they are unable to get it. As a Veterinary doctor, I am licensed to prescribe medication to any pet in any state, as long as I have a Valid Client Patient Relationship with them, meaning that I have examined that pet for that condition within the past year. This is not only important for clients and their pets in our local area, but also for those clients who travel with their pets for short or extended periods of time, needing refills of their medications.

Practicing in Niagara, WI, my only options for local pharmacies are in Iron Mountain, MI. There are no pharmacies in Niagara, WI, with the closest WI pharmacy being 45 minutes away. However, recently, pharmacies in MI have begun to refuse to fill controlled drug prescriptions for me. I am being told that even though I am a Veterinary doctor, with a DEA license, that MI law supersedes that DEA license, and it is against the law for them to fill controlled drug prescriptions for me. The pharmacists are telling me that the law states that only Physician prescribers, and Dentist prescribers from states other than MI are allowed to write prescriptions for controlled drugs. I then asked if I had a MI license, would I be able to have controlled drug prescriptions filled for my patients, and I was again told it would be denied because the prescription originated on WI soil and I am a Veterinarian rather than a Physician prescriber or Dentist prescriber. So, the current issue is that MI will not fill controlled drug substances for Veterinarians outside of the state.

The current law has not only caused me and many of my clients considerable frustration, but may lead to also lead to lost clients and income for my Animal Hospital. I do my best to find the lowest cost medications for my clients, but I cannot compete with the Big Box stores, who fill prescriptions for less than I can even buy the medication for. They have considerably more buying power than I do, and can purchase medications in such large quantities, making the overall price of the drug much lower than I can. I am more than happy to write a prescription to a local pharmacy, but if that pharmacy will not fill the prescription, there lies the problem. The law as it currently stands, puts the life of many animals in danger. If my clients are unable to get Phenobarbital, their pets may die from their seizure disorder. Can you envision a human patient, unable to get the medication that controls their seizures, lying in bed seizing continuously all day? This law as it currently stands may force some of my clients to leave my practice, and

choose one closer to a WI pharmacy, resulting in lost profits for our clinic. Not only that, but it results in lost profits for the pharmacies in MI that will not fill prescriptions for me.

As Veterinarians, we are doctors, too, and should be recognized as such by the law. I hope you'll take into consideration the changes that are recommended, and will move swiftly to make these changes in the law. I cannot possibly be the only Veterinarian, nor my clients be the only clients affected by this current law. We would all thank you immensely should the changes be made.

Sincerely,

Heather Bissen, DVM