



THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPRESENTATIVE KATE HOGAN
THIRD MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 130, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02133-1053

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Contact:
Kelsey Schiller
Communications Director
Office of Representative Kate Hogan
(617) 722-2130
kelsey.schiller@mahouse.gov

Hogan measure to improve patient safety included in state budget

BOSTON— Representative Kate Hogan is pleased to announce that her proposal to improve the quality and safety of current practices for dispensing certain cancer- and chronic disease-related drugs was included in the state budget for Fiscal Year 2018. Rep. Hogan filed a bill on this issue in January, at the start of the legislative session, and her proposed language was included as Section 130 of the [FY18 budget](#), which was signed into law by Governor Baker in July.

Currently, there are a number of methods by which a patient may procure certain medications related to the treatment of cancer and other chronic diseases. The three common scenarios are: (1) medication can be purchased and administered at a healthcare facility (a practice commonly referred to as “*buy and bill*”), (2) medication can be purchased through a specialty pharmacy and delivered directly to a healthcare provider (a practice called “*white-bagging*”), or (3) medication can be purchased through a specialty pharmacy and delivered directly to a patient (a practice called “*brown-bagging*”). When a patient purchases medication from a specialty pharmacy, as with “*white-bagging*” / “*brown-bagging*,” the medication must then be administered to the patient by a provider.

Many medications need to be stored at specific temperatures or kept away from light, but in instances of “*white-bagging* / “*brown-bagging*,” the potential exists for medication to be mishandled and even compromised as it changes hands multiple times. As it stands, public health officials are currently unaware of how prevalent “*white-bagging*” / “*brown-bagging*” is in Massachusetts. Moreover, when compared to purchasing medication directly from a hospital, “*buy and bill*,” it is unclear whether “*white-bagging*” / “*brown-bagging*” is more cost-effective and whether the integrity of the medication can be protected.

Rep. Hogan’s measure tasks the Health Policy Commission, along with the Department of Public Health and the Division of Insurance, to study the practices of “*white-bagging*” / “*brown-bagging*.” The Health Policy Commission, as an independent evaluator of healthcare issues, will provide an analytic review of these practices and submit a report of their findings. Should any further legislative action be needed to address issues related to “*white-bagging*” / “*brown-bagging*,” such recommendations will be included.

“For many individuals battling cancer or other chronic diseases, getting your medication is not always simple,” said Representative Kate Hogan, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Public Health. “In instances of “*white-bagging*” / “*brown-bagging*,” the patient and provider are burdened with ensuring that medication is appropriately handled, as opposed to the structured nature of pharmaceutical management that exists within hospitals to the benefit of “*buy and bill*.” My proposal will allow for deeper understanding to both examine the current state of medicine delivery in the Commonwealth and determine whether better solutions exist to improve the patient experience.”

Rep. Hogan’s measure was included in the FY18 budget as an “outside section” – meaning that the policy does not have a fiscal impact to the state. As was outlined in the budget, the Health Policy Commission shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature, along with any proposed legislation, by July 1, 2018.

Representative Kate Hogan

Representative Kate Hogan represents the Third Middlesex District, which includes the towns of Bolton, Hudson, Maynard, and Stow. She currently serves as the House Chair on the Joint Committee on Public Health. She also serves as Chair of the Library Legislative Caucus and Co-Chair of the Legislature's Elder Caucus. Rep. Hogan can be reached by phone at 617-722-2130 or by email at Kate.Hogan@MAhouse.gov. You can also connect with Rep. Hogan on Facebook ([facebook.com/kate.hogan.948](https://www.facebook.com/kate.hogan.948)) or Twitter ([@repkatehogan](https://twitter.com/repkatehogan)).



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