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December 4, 2018

The Honorable Hank Vaupel
Chairman, House Health Policy Committee
Post Office Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Chairman Vaupel and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Michigan State Medical Society, which represents 15,000 physician members collectively serving a million patients statewide, I write to share our concerns with Senate Bill 1198, legislation that would repeal the sunset on an existing ban on the remote prescribing of a prescription-induced medical abortion.

Our concerns with the legislation stem mainly from the principle that we should not circumscribe access to FDA-approved medication for patients. If we are to allow the remote prescribing of medicine then that authorization should extend across the board. In this case, absent the ability to prescribe remotely, a woman would have to travel to a clinic, hospital, or office to take the medication. The unfortunate reality is that this isn't feasible in many remote areas of the state, hence the impetus for and expansion of telemedicine.

With regards to concerns around safety, no other medication with similar medical risks are being restricted in such a way. And, in fact, the American Medical Association recently approved policy to encourage the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to lift the Risk Evaluation Management Strategy (REMS) – which ensure the benefits of a drug outweigh the risks – for mifepristone due to its safety profile.

We share a common goal of ensuring access to safe medical care for Michigan patients. Unfortunately, this legislation undermines that goal and, in legislating arbitrary determinations around what medications patients are able to access, sets a concerning precedent.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns with you. Should you have any questions, please contact MSMS Director of State and Federal Government Relations, Christin Nohner, at cnohner@msms.org or 517-336-5737.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Betty Chu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Betty" and last name "Chu" clearly distinguishable.

Betty Chu, MD, MBA
President, Michigan State Medical Society