



Content provided by MIRS News.
Visit us on the web at www.mirsnews.com.

◀ Tuesday, November 27, 2018 ▶

Late-Addition Telemedicine Abortion Ban Shoots Through Panel

A Dec. 31 sunset on a state law banning abortions through "telemedicine" would be eliminated under legislation that moved out of the Senate Health Policy Committee on a party-line 7-3 vote.

Gov. Rick [SNYDER](#) signed legislation in 2012 that created the six-year ban on doctors being able to prescribe the two-pill abortion drugs mifepristone and misoprostol through Skype or some other two-way video device (See "[Senate OKs Abortion Bills, Sans Viagra, Vasectomy Amendments](#)," 12/12/12).

Right to Life's Genevieve **MARNON** said of the 26,000 abortions in Michigan last year, 35 percent were done with the chemical abortions. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) included these pills on a select list of drugs that require extra precaution.

For that reason, Marnon argued that discussions involving these drugs should be done in person.

"Keeping the ban in place is a safety issue," she said.

Sen. Curtis [HERTEL](#) Jr. (D-East Lansing) argued that if there's a genuine concern about making sure these drugs with the Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) tag are only prescribed in person, then all 75 drugs should be listed in the bill.

"I believe you're overstating the position of the FDA," Hertel told Marnon.

Senate Health Policy Committee Chair Mike [SHIRKEY](#) (R-Clarklake) said if Hertel was interested in making that happen, he could introduce his own legislation. Hertel also grumbled that 🐾 [SB 1198](#) was added to the committee's agenda 90 minutes before the committee.

Shirkey told *MIRS* he wasn't informed until this morning about the pending sunset. Sympathetic toward the cause, he agreed to make the late addition, considering session days are running short.

The Michigan Academy of Family Physicians, ACLU and Planned Parenthood all opposed Sen. Tom [CASPERSON](#)'s 🐾 [SB 1198](#) in that it eliminates health care services for women in underserved, rural areas.

"Politicians are not medical experts and yet this legislation has been written with the end goal of having safe, legal abortion difficult or even impossible to access," wrote Planned Parenthood's

Amanda **WEST**. "We can call it what it is -- an ideological and political plot to place barriers between women and their doctors."

West said telehealth delivery of medication abortion has been demonstrated to be just as safe and effective as in-person protocols, an opinion shared by the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

The Iowa Supreme Court ruled recently that preventing physicians from administering a medication remotely through video teleconferencing in that state placed an undue burden on a woman's right to access an abortion, West wrote in her testimony.

The Michigan Catholic Conference testified in support of the bill.

Hertel attempted some amendments that didn't go anywhere. His last yielded some chuckles when he tried to expand the ban on telemedicine to those wanting Viagra, the popular drug used to help males get erections.

"If we are going to be worried about people's safety and looking at the possible complications that are possible, including stroke and a loss of blood pressure, especially when used with vigorous activity, I would say that Viagra is at least as big a medical threat," Hertel said.

To that, Sen. Joe **HUNE** (R-Hamburg Twp.) quipped, "You might have a vote tally issue because we may have colleagues who will have to abstain due to conflict of interest."

That amendment failed 5-5 with Sen. Rick **JONES** (R-Grand Ledge) commenting, "I wouldn't want Curtis to have a stroke."