



September 11, 2017

The Honorable Ron Young
Chairman, Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Opposition to HB 193

Dear Representative Young:

The Ohio Hospital Association, along with the Ohio Children's Hospital Association, Ohio State Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics—Ohio Chapter, and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on House Bill 193, which has implications for employers' rights to implement safety precautions for influenza.

OHA, OCHA, OSMA, Ohio AAP, and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce oppose HB 193 for reasons including the following:

- **The flu vaccine is the most effective method to prevent influenza, a serious disease that can lead to health complications and death, especially for high-risk patients.**
- **The flu vaccine is associated with decreasing health care costs, including reduced risk of illness, work absenteeism, antibiotic use and medical visits.**
- **As employers, it is imperative that hospitals have the flexibility to implement health and safety precautions they deem most appropriate for carrying out their missions to provide high quality patient care and protect the well-being of their employees.**

Ohio's hospitals and physicians are concerned that this legislation threatens the health and safety of patients, employees and the community. It is important to understand that influenza is a serious health risk, and that nationally, approximately 266,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 people die annually as a result of the disease. The flu vaccine is the most effective method to prevent influenza, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all U.S. health care workers get vaccinated annually against influenza.

Some individuals, such as older adults, pregnant women and very young children, as well as those with certain medical conditions are highly susceptible to serious complications from the flu. Health care personnel have frequent contact with these high-risk patients in many settings. These employees can serve as a vehicle to transmit influenza before symptoms develop. In fact, as many as 25 percent of health care personnel with the flu may have minimal or no symptoms, but can still transmit infection. Our patients rely on our institutions to be safe and disease free environments to ensure they receive the best quality of care.

Hospitals and physicians are also continually being asked to help reduce health care costs. Influenza vaccinations have been associated with reduced risk of illness, work absenteeism, antibiotic use and medical visits. Medicare quality reporting standards and the U.S. Department of Health and the Human Services' Healthy Patients 2020 initiative both have standards for the vaccination of health care employees. Many legislators at the state level also have been pushing for hospitals and other health care entities to move toward value-based purchasing. The Medicare value-based purchasing program includes vaccination of health care employees.

We appreciate the efforts of the committee to consider amendments that would provide additional options for employers. However, we remain concerned that the legislation does not provide sufficient flexibility for hospitals and physicians. It is of utmost importance that hospitals and health care providers have the ability to manage their facilities and practices the way they feel is best to protect health and safety.

In its current form, HB 193 infringes upon the rights of private employers to craft internal policies that best serve the patients for whom they provide care, as well as their staff members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rick Frank
Senior Director, Government Affairs
Ohio Hospital Association



Nick Lashutka
President
Ohio Children's Hospital Association



Monica Hueckel
Director, Government Affairs
Ohio State Medical Association



Melissa Wervey Arnold
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Boyd". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Don Boyd
Director, Labor & Legal Affairs
Ohio Chamber of Commerce

cc: The Honorable Cliff Rosenberger, Speaker
The Honorable Christina Hagan
The Honorable Anthony DeVitis
The Honorable Michele Lepore-Hagan
The Honorable Steven M. Arndt
The Honorable Thomas E. Brinkman, Jr.
The Honorable Bill Dean
The Honorable Dave Greenspan
The Honorable Ron Hood
The Honorable Brigid Kelly
The Honorable Al Landis
The Honorable P. Scott Lipps
The Honorable Alicia Reece
The Honorable Michael Sheehy
The Honorable Dick Stein
The Honorable Thomas West