



Ohio Council of Retail Merchants & Affiliates

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The Honorable Steve Huffman, Chairman
Ohio House Health Committee
77 South High Street, 12th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Huffman and Members of the House Health Committee:

On behalf of the Chain Drug Committee of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, I would like to express our support for Representative Merrin's House Bill 101, otherwise known as the "Epinephrine Accessibility Act." Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts.

The law permitting pharmacists to substitute generically equivalent drugs in place of prescribed brand name drugs has saved patients, employers, government payers and health plans billions of dollars since first authorized. Without generic substitution, many patients would be unable to afford their needed prescription medications, many of which are life-saving.

Epinephrine is one of those life-saving prescription medications, helping to prevent death in the case of severe allergic reactions. Given the recent drastic increase in the price of the branded epinephrine auto-injector known as EpiPen, it is both logical and practical to permit pharmacists to substitute a much lower cost generically equivalent epinephrine auto-injector as long as the physician has not specified the branded product on the prescription and the patient authorizes the substitution. It was surprising to learn that current law does not allow such a substitution.

It also makes great sense to permit pharmacists to dispense epinephrine auto-injectors to those 18 years or older without a prescription as long as a proper protocol with a physician is in place. Auto-injectors contain a measured dose of epinephrine that is safely administered, saving countless lives when severe allergic reactions have occurred. Epinephrine is not addictive, is not a controlled substance and is not considered a drug of abuse. It should be widely available in public venues for emergency administration in cases of severe allergic reactions, stopping anaphylactic shock and possible death.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of and hopeful support for House Bill 101 and we particularly appreciate Representative Merrin's sponsorship of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Lora Miller
Director of Governmental Affairs and Public Relations

Council Affiliates

 Ohio Association of Wholesaler-Distributors



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