



SB 265 Proponent Testimony
Presented by Joseph Tobias, M.D.
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Before the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee
May 15, 2018

Chairman Hottinger, Vice Chairman Hackett, Ranking Minority Member Brown, and members of the Senate Insurance & Financial Institutions Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 265. My name is Dr. Joseph Tobias and I am the Chief of the Department of Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine at Nationwide Children's Hospital, an attending physician in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (ICU,) and a Professor of Anesthesiology and Pediatrics at The Ohio State University.

I have had the pleasure of working alongside and publishing with pharmacists during my 30 years of clinical practice in pediatric anesthesiology and critical care. A substantial body of evidence supports the growing role of the pharmacist as a member of the patient care team. As I wrote in a 2014 article in *Pediatric Critical Care Medicine* (2014;15:268-270) "Even for those of us who have practiced in the pediatric intensive care unit setting for decades, the addition of specialized clinical pharmacists on daily rounds has greatly improved the quality of care in many settings and decreased the potential for morbidity."

Unfortunately, unlike other healthcare professions, pharmacists are not yet recognized as "providers" under state or federal law. This presents a significant challenge for organizations who desire to add pharmacists to their patient care teams since pharmacists are unable to bill or be reimbursed for the clinical services they provide. As many of you know, pharmacists are highly educated and specialized professionals, graduating with Doctor of Pharmacy degrees. They often go on to complete one or more years of residency training following graduation. As part of their practice, pharmacists consider drug to drug and drug to disease state interactions, recommend the addition, removal, and titration of medications, provide medication reconciliation and educate patients and families about medications.

The changes proposed in Senate Bill 265 give pharmacists the ability to bill for and be reimbursed for the services they provide as part of their consult agreement with physicians. This allows physicians to focus their time and energy on medical matters yet still maintain awareness of all patient care being delivered and provide guidance as necessary. By granting provider status to pharmacists, Ohioans will be afforded greater access to the clinical skills and patient care pharmacists provide. I enthusiastically support Senate Bill 265 and respectfully ask for your favorable consideration. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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