

**Testimony Before the House Aging & Long-Term Care Committee  
House Bill 509**

**May 28, 2020**

Good afternoon, Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Howse, and members of the committee. My name is Pete Van Runkle. I am Executive Director of the Ohio Health Care Association (OHCA). OHCA is the state's largest organization representing long-term services and supports providers. We count in our membership more than 1,100 assisted living communities, providers serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, home care and hospice agencies, and skilled nursing centers.

We offer written testimony today in support of House Bill 509 and appreciate the sponsor's work in introducing this measure.

House Bill 509 is not legislation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, it addresses a pre-COVID concern for assisted living communities, which are called residential care facilities (RCFs) in Ohio licensing law (ORC Chapter 3721). OHCA represents assisted living communities across the state, and it is on behalf of this portion of our membership that we are proponents of House Bill 509.

Before an assisted living community can open for business, it has to get various governmental approvals, the last of which is a license from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). Before ODH can issue the license, the agency must conduct a survey (inspection) of the facility. Initial licensure surveys for RCFs are not prioritized by ODH compared to various other types of surveys they are responsible for doing. As a result, RCF operators often must wait a considerable period of time before they can receive a license and people can begin to move in.

This is both a consumer issue and a provider issue. It is a provider issue because the assisted living operator must pay the cost of the building (construction, equipment, financing) whether or not it is occupied and generating revenue to defray the costs. It is a consumer issue because individuals in the community who need assisted living and are looking forward to moving in cannot do so.

House Bill 509 solves these problems by allowing an applicant for an RCF license to pay a fee to ODH to get the initial survey expedited. Under the expedited process, the survey must be done

within 10 days after the department receives the request. The fee pays ODH's costs for dispatching a surveyor to conduct the inspection, and the applicant is willing to pay the fee to allow them to start operating sooner.

This same expedited survey mechanism, with the fee, has been in the Revised Code for a number of years for skilled nursing centers. Most operators who open a new skilled facility take advantage of the process. House Bill 509 simply extends this opportunity to RCFs, which currently are not covered by the expedited survey law.

OHCA urges the committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 509.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these written remarks. I would be happy to respond to any questions from committee members at 614-361-5169 or [pvanrunkle@ohca.org](mailto:pvanrunkle@ohca.org).