

To: Members of the House Finance Committee

Fr: Monica Hueckel, Senior Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association
Joe Rosato, Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association

Da: June 19, 2019

Re: House Bill 11

On behalf of the nearly 16,000 physician, resident and medical student members of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), we are writing to express our support for House Bill 11, which would expand tobacco cessation and oral health care services, increase lead education, and support group prenatal health care programs in Ohio.

The sponsors have indicated that several of the goals of this bill are to improve maternal health and decrease the infant mortality rate in Ohio. HB 11 would require the Medicaid program to establish a grant program for the provision of group-based prenatal care services, allowing many lower-income and at-risk pregnant women to obtain necessary prenatal care. Receiving appropriate prenatal care is, of course, essential to helping ensure optimal birth and post-delivery outcomes for both mothers and their babies. Additionally, the Medicaid program would be required to cover two annual dental cleanings for pregnant women. Dental and oral health is intrinsically linked to overall health, and studies indicate that proper dental care can also improve pregnancy outcomes.

Addiction, including use of tobacco, is a driver of many of our state's health challenges. HB 11 would require the Medicaid program and Medicaid managed care organizations to cover certain tobacco cessation medications and services, bolstering the state's efforts to lower Ohio's tobacco use rates, particularly in vulnerable populations.

HB 11 also directs the Department of Health to develop educational materials concerning lead-based paint and to distribute these materials to families participating in its Help Me Grow program and residing in homes built before 1979. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children living at or below the poverty line and in older housing are at greatest risk of lead exposure, which can have negative and lifelong consequences on health.

HB 11 reflects several recommendations from the Health Policy Institute of Ohio's [2019 Health Value Dashboard Report](#), which evaluated Ohio's performance on population health outcomes and health care spending. In this report, Ohio ranked #46 out of 50 states and D.C. on health value, landing in the bottom quartile on nearly 30% of metrics ranked. Based on the rankings, HPIO made a list of 9 strategies for Ohio to improve health value, among which were recommendations for increased education and awareness of lead risk and lead screenings, and prioritization of tobacco reduction efforts.

Thank you for your attention to our comments on HB 11 and for the opportunity to be meaningful contributors to the legislative process. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.