



House Health Committee

House Bill 177 – Proponent Testimony

Jeff Dillon – Legislative Liaison

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Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today on House Bill 177. My name is Jeff Dillon, and I am the Legislative Liaison for Americans for Prosperity – Ohio. Our organization is dedicated to breaking internal and external barriers that stand in the way of people realizing their full potential. Removing these barriers, in whatever forms they take, helps move our society toward one of mutual benefit, where people succeed by helping others improve their lives and transform their communities. The patient-centered reforms outlined in HB 177 to expand access to advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) address our state's large and growing doctor shortage.

Ohio faces some of the worst physician shortages of any state in the nation. According to the US Department from Health and Human Services (HHS), over 1.4 million Ohioans live in areas that face a severe shortage of physicians.ⁱ

Unfortunately, this access crisis is only getting worse. A 2017 survey conducted by the American Association of Medical Colleges found that nearly 30 percent of all Ohio physicians are over 60 years old and are expected to retire over the next several years.ⁱⁱ In other words, families across the state will have to wait even longer, travel farther, and pay more for basic medical care in the near future.

Fortunately, this legislation would empower APRNs to provide for Ohio's growing medical needs. The bill would allow nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, and clinical nurse specialists to independently deliver all the primary and specialty health care services they are trained to provide. Currently, APRNs are required to work under the direct supervision of a doctor through Standard Care Agreements whenever they practice, which limits their capacity to treat patients in areas that lack physicians. Burdensome supervision requirements also consume physician time that could be better spent by them focusing on patients with complex cases.

By ending this burdensome requirement, this proposal would dramatically expand access to medical care in communities that face physician shortages. Because APRNs require fewer years of training to practice than physicians, they can readily deploy to underserved areas with the greatest health care

needs. The federal Health Resources Services Administration estimates states could reduce their physician shortages by two-thirds simply by loosening or removing barriers that prevent nurses from independently treating patients.ⁱⁱⁱ

Eliminating restrictions on advanced nurses will also significantly lower the cost of medical care. Nurse practitioners spend considerably less money attaining their training and certifications and pass along these savings to patients in the form of lower prices. The Journal of Nursing Regulations even found that states that allow nurse to freely practice medicine spend 17 percent less on outpatient care than states that restrict their capacity to practice.^{iv}

This committee can ensure more families receive the health care they need by allowing APRNs to provide the full range of high-quality medical care they are trained and certified to deliver. AFP – Ohio would like to encourage your support HB 177 in committee to strengthen health care access, lower costs, and address Ohio’s harmful doctor shortage.

We thank you for the opportunity to address this critical issue, and we look forward to working with the committee to craft real reforms that expand access to affordable and high-quality health care for all Ohioans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I’d be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

Our Mission: Americans for Prosperity exists to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state and federal level, helping every American live their dream – especially the least fortunate

ⁱ <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/primary-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.aamc.org/download/484578/data/ohiopprofile.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/health-workforce-analysis/primary-care-2020>

^{iv} [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(19\)30078-X/pdf](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(19)30078-X/pdf)