

Dr. Kelly Duffner, DC
Proponent Testimony – House Bill 151
May 14th, 2019

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for affording me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 151. My name is Dr. Kelly Duffner and I am a chiropractic physician who practices in the Cincinnati area.

As a chiropractic physician, I help patients regain their strength, motion, reduce their pain, and help them get back their life while lessening their dependence on potentially addictive drugs and surgical procedures. This affords the public another option to manage their chronic or acute conditions with little to no side effects. With regard to the current opioid epidemic, one study found that nearly 80% of current heroin users reported they began with prescription opioids. The economic impact of this reality is tremendous. One study from The Ohio State University in 2016 stated that the opioid epidemic costs Ohio 8.8 billion dollars per year or over 24 million dollars per day. The billion dollar question becomes, “How do we reduce this burden for the addict themselves, their family, and the taxpayers?”

Unfortunately, the rises of out of pocket deductibles shy consumers away from therapies that may be partially covered or not covered entirely by their insurance plans. This is especially evident in lower income populations and steers them to cheaper medications that may cause side effects and dependence. This perpetuates the current crisis. Therapies that lessen our dependence on prescription medication should be greatly considered and made readily available to high risk populations.

A recent study from the State of Rhode Island encouraging Chiropractic care and other alternative therapies reduced opioid prescriptions by 86% in higher risk Medicaid patients.

I stand before you today as a supporter of this bill that creates the Ohio Chiropractic Loan Repayment Program, a program that is mirrored off of the Ohio Physician Loan Repayment Program as well as the Dental and Dental Hygienist Loan Repayment Program. Specifically, this bill provides chiropractic services in a designated chiropractic health resource shortage area for a minimum of two years and stipulates a Doctor of Chiropractic sees a patient regardless of their ability to pay. Selected applicants into the Ohio Chiropractic Loan Repayment Program may receive up to \$10,000 annually for repayment of outstanding chiropractic school debt. As a younger Doctor of Chiropractic in the state I can speak directly to a question that was asked during sponsor testimony regarding the cost of attending and graduating from chiropractic school.

The cost of higher education has exponentially exploded as you all may have a son or daughter in college right now. A doctor of Chiropractic in the State of Ohio is required to have a

Bachelor's degree in addition to a Doctor of Chiropractic Degree. This is an additional 3-4 years of professional education. It is not uncommon for a recent graduate to take out one hundred to two hundred thousand dollars' worth of student loan debt to cover the cost of education. These loans are also not low interest. Interest ranges from 6% up to nearly 9%. While there are programs to help recent graduates pay back their loans, it's like trying to dig yourself out of an avalanche with a spork. This bill would allow me to pay some of my student loans back for what I do best; adjusting spines and helping people get their life back.

Chairman Merrin and members of this committee, thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony and at this time, I would be happy to answer any questions.