



**Representative Don Manning**  
59<sup>th</sup> Ohio House District

### **HB 323 Sponsor Testimony**

Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 323.

We face a crisis in mental health access across Ohio. Currently, 72 of Ohio's 88 counties have been deemed a Mental Health Professional Shortage area by the US Department of Health and Human Services. This is a serious issue as over 1.5 million Ohioans, or 1 in 4 adults, are in need of mental health treatment. According to the American Academy of Medical Colleges, 60 percent of psychiatrists are over the age of 55, and only 35 percent accept Medicaid. Further, according to their respective associations, only 1.3 percent of Physician Assistants and 2.4 percent of Nurse Practitioners practice in psychiatry.

My legislation will address this workforce shortage. It will allow specially trained and certified psychologists to prescribe medications used for the treatment of mental illness and substance addiction, provided they meet the following criteria.

- They are a doctorate level psychologist, licensed in the state of Ohio;
- have completed a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology;
- have completed 700 hours of clinical supervision, 350 of which are under a psychiatrist;
- have passed the Psychopharmacology Examination for Psychologists, administered by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards;
- have entered into and maintain a collaborative relationship with a state licensed physician;
- and have applied to the State Psychology Board and adhere to all relevant rules/regulations governing the prescription of medications in Ohio.

Once the individual has completed all the above conditions, they will still be required to obtain certification every two years from the Ohio Board of Psychology. This certification will require the completion of twenty-four hours of continuing education specific to psychopharmacology in addition to their current continuing education requirements.

The benefits of allowing psychologists to prescribe medications in cases of mental illness and substance abuse go beyond cutting the waiting time to see a psychiatrist or supplementing the availability of mental health services across the state. By the nature of the profession, psychologists know and incorporate a multitude of techniques to deal with addiction and mental illness. Allowing psychologists to prescribe medications in conjunction with other methods of treatment already being used will offer a multi-prong approach for situations that require more than what traditional psychological therapies can provide on their own.

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Illinois, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, and New Mexico currently allow psychologists to prescribe psychotropic medications. The US Armed Forces, US Public Health Service, and Indian Health Service also allow for this prescriptive authority.

I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on this essential piece of legislation and welcome any questions that you may have.

