



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Canton City Public Health

November 8, 2019

Honorable Scott Lipps
Chair, Health Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Lipps and members of the House Health Committee:

I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the passage of House Bill 40. This bill would increase testing for certain sexually transmitted infections (STI) in pregnant women at critical periods in their pregnancy. Identifying an STI early can have great benefits for the health of the mother and their unborn child.

We know from our work in the community on infant mortality that having one or more STI's during pregnancy is a risk factor for fetal death and increased infant mortality. Prevention and treatment of an STI will have positive benefits in reducing the risk of harm to the mothers unborn child.

As an example, Ohio is currently ranked thirteenth, out of all 50 states, for gonorrhea cases in 2018. Gonorrhea, if left untreated during pregnancy, is linked to miscarriages, premature birth, and eye infections. The significance of third trimester testing is the difference between life-long health problems or a healthy beginning.

STI's such as gonorrhea and syphilis can safely be treated and cured with antibiotics that are safe to take during pregnancy. Third trimester testing for STI's is a simple, cost effective, and safe policy to reduce the risk of pre-term births and infant mortality.

I encourage your passage of this measure to protect the health of moms and babies in our community.

Sincerely yours,

James M. Adams, MPH, RS
Health Commissioner

pc: Representative West —