

**Ohio House of Representatives
Health Committee
HB40 Testing Pregnant Women for HIV, Syphilis, and Gonorrhea
Testimony of Amy Burkett, MD
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Ohio Section**

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Manning and Ranking Member Boyd, my name is Dr. Amy Burkett. I am an obstetrician-gynecologist currently working as a Laborist in Cleveland. I have lived in Ohio my entire life. I received my medical degree from the Northeast Ohio Medical University, affectionately known as NEOMED, and then did my residency at The Ohio State University Medical Center before returning back to Northeast Ohio. I was in private practice for 10 years prior to starting my current position a year ago. I currently serve as Chair for the Ohio Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG, Ohio).

As you may know, ACOG is our specialty's premier professional membership organization dedicated to the improvement of women's health. In Ohio, ACOG represents over 1500 obstetrician-gynecologists and their patients; and nationally ACOG represents approximately 58,000 obstetrician-gynecologists and women's health care professionals. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written opponent testimony for HB40.

We appreciate the intention of the sponsors to address the rising rates of sexually transmitted infections and recognize government serves a valuable role in the protection of public health. However, it is critical for government to refrain from regulations that come between a patient and her physician. The provision of medical care must be a matter determined by the patient and her physician; interference in the physician-patient relationship should not be taken lightly. Medical situations are never one-size fits all; it is imperative to realize that every woman's circumstance is unique, and by regulating the physician-patient interaction, you will be limiting the physician from providing evidence-based medicine. Physicians need to be able to provide guidance that is relevant and appropriate in their best medical judgment, and the patient needs to be able to trust that her physician is providing appropriate counseling based on their needs.

Ohio physicians should be able to practice medicine as their training and experience dictate; health care providers have a professional and ethical obligation to provide care that is evidence-based, safe, individualized, and medically-appropriate. It is also important to note that the CDC and ACOG have already instituted best-care models which have increased STD screening protocols based on resurgences of diseases like syphilis without government interference. We would be happy to provide more information regarding the screening protocols per the request of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB40. I appreciate your consideration, urge you to vote no on this bill, and I hope you will consider ACOG Ohio and myself a valuable resource for all items relating to the practice of obstetrics and gynecology and women's health issues.