

THE OHIO COUNCIL OF

*Retail Merchants*

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April 11, 2019

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING  
BEFORE THE HOUSE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

**LORA MILLER, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENTAL  
AFFAIRS & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Good morning Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member West and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health & Human Services. Thank you for the opportunity to request your support for an amendment to House Bill 166 to require that all prescribers use electronic prescribing systems under most circumstances.

The member companies of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants that provide pharmacy services support requiring the use of electronic prescribing to transmit prescription information between prescribers and pharmacists. Requiring the use of this technology will improve safety and security in the prescribing process and will virtually eliminate fraudulent paper prescriptions.

In recent years, the adoption of electronic prescribing has increased dramatically. According to the most recent data available, 1.74 billion prescriptions were issued electronically in the United States last year, which equates to more than 4.7 million prescriptions per day. While that number continues to grow, there is room to further improve the rate of electronic prescribing, particularly with controlled substance prescriptions, which lag behind overall adoption of this beneficial technology. Ken Whittemore of SureScripts LLC will present Ohio-specific data in his subsequent testimony.

The use of electronic prescribing technologies has numerous benefits for both patients and healthcare providers. Recognizing the important role of electronic prescribing in helping to curb the opioid crisis, Congress recently enacted federal legislation requiring controlled substance prescriptions covered under Medicare Part D to be electronically transmitted starting in 2021. We are asking you to build upon this effort by extending the requirement to apply to all prescriptions issued in Ohio – not just for controlled substances and not just those covered by Medicare.

The Benefits of Electronic Prescribing:

- Electronic prescribing of controlled substances adds new dimensions of safety and security. Electronic controlled substance prescriptions cannot be altered, cannot be copied, and are electronically trackable. Furthermore, the federal DEA rules for electronic controlled substances prescriptions establish strict security measures, such as

two-factor authentication, that reduce the likelihood of fraudulent prescribing. Notably, the state of New York saw a 70% reduction in the rate of lost or stolen prescription forms after implementing its own mandatory e-prescribing law. They also saw a 10% reduction in opioid prescriptions overall.

- Studies show that electronic prescriptions are less prone to errors. According to a study conducted at a Johns Hopkins Medication outpatient pharmacy, 89% of handwritten prescriptions failed to meet best practice guidelines or were missing information that would otherwise be prompted by an electronic prescribing system. By comparison, not a single prescription in that study issued electronically contained these types of errors. Electronic prescribing also eliminates data-input mistakes at the pharmacy level, reducing the number of dispensing errors.
- Electronic prescribing practices reduce the number of prescriptions that go unfilled and serve to improve medication adherence. Electronic prescriptions are sent directly to the patient's pharmacy of choice. This technology allows healthcare providers to monitor and improve patient first-fill adherence, as patients are more likely to fill prescriptions that are sent electronically to their pharmacy, as opposed to having to take the prescription to the pharmacy themselves.
- Electronic prescribing practices improve patient care and outcomes. It eliminates handwriting errors, and this technology allows prescribers to track whether the prescription was filled and how often it is refilled. Electronic prescribing tools also enable clinical decision-making at point of care; when electronic prescribing is part of a healthcare provider's electronic health record system, prescriptions can be checked for interactions with patient medications, health conditions, and allergies. This serves to improve patient outcomes.
- Electronic prescribing improves workflow in healthcare settings. It reduces the administrative burden on physicians and clinical office staff responding to prescription refill authorization. Further, electronic prescribing streamlines the process of getting the prescription to the pharmacy, thereby reducing the time spent by pharmacists and prescribers on the phone. Finally, this technology allows for controlled substance prescriptions to be transmitted electronically along with other prescriptions.
- Electronic prescribing practices gives prescribers more flexibility with getting needed prescriptions into the hands of patients. Electronic prescriptions eliminate the need for patients to have to travel to the prescriber's office to pick up a hard copy prescription, which is especially useful when patients are out of town.
- Electronic prescribing drives down healthcare costs. Through the use of tools that allow for greater price transparency at the point of prescribing and enhanced formulary compliance, electronic prescribing practices can help to control healthcare costs.

Electronic prescribing would provide another weapon in the war against opioid abuse in Ohio along with its many other benefits and as such, we encourage its inclusion in House Bill 166. Thank you again for this opportunity and I will attempt to answer any questions you may have.