



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

Sponsor Testimony
Senator Tina Maharath
Senate Bill 51
Health, Human Services, & Medicaid Committee
Wednesday May 1, 2019

Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 51.

Senate Bill 51 is a re-introduction from the 132nd General Assembly, which requires a non-opioid directive form be provided to patients who wish to not be prescribed opiates for pain treatment. Health providers would be required to distribute information regarding evidence-based non-opioid therapies to the patient or patient's representative prior to prescribing opioids. Health insurance plans would also be required to provide coverage for evidence-based non-opioid therapies such as chiropractic services, acupuncture, and osteopathic medicine.

Michigan, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Louisiana, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and Alaska have all passed legislation or have made administrative changes that allow patients to opt-out of opioid prescriptions. Although patients typically have the right to make decisions about the medical care they receive and whether they want certain treatments, a non-opioid directive tool will help make a patient's wishes more clear to the healthcare provider, especially in advance of medical care or if a patient becomes incapacitated.

Many Ohioans who suffer from opiate addiction first become addicted after being prescribed opioid medications to treat symptoms of pain. Often times those with a history of substance abuse are prescribed opioids and are put in a situation where they must either take medication that is detrimental to their wellbeing or be forced to endure the pain to avoid becoming addicted or relapsing.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, combating prescription opioid abuse continues to be critical to Ohio's overall efforts to fight drug abuse, addiction and overdose because prescription opioid abuse is a key risk factor for the use of illicit drugs like fentanyl and related drugs.



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In order to more effectively combat the opioid epidemic, we must better equip patients with the tools they need to make more informed decisions about their pain treatment and pain medications.

Chairman Burke and members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention to this issue and I respectfully request your favorable consideration and passage of Senate Bill 51. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.