

To: Members of the Ohio Senate Local Government, Public Safety, & Veterans Affairs Committee

Fr: Monica Hueckel, Senior Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association
Joe Rosato, Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association

Da: February 11, 2020

Re: HB 29 – Dextromethorphan Sales

On behalf of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), the state's oldest and largest professional organization representing physicians, medical residents, and medical students, we write in support of House Bill 29.

HB 29 would prohibit the sale of dextromethorphan without a prescription to any individual under the age of 18. Unfortunately, there is an emerging trend of abuse of dextromethorphan, the active ingredient in cough syrup, by youth. This has caught the attention of many health care professionals, including our OSMA physician members, particularly those who see young patients in emergency departments. Our members have treated these young patients after they have ingested cough syrup in high dosages, and the alarming adverse effects can be dizziness, double or blurred vision, slurred speech, confusion, loss of physical coordination, vomiting, or rapid heartbeat. These symptoms may require emergency medical attention.

HB 29 would restrict access to this medication by children by requiring children and teenagers who need this medication for medical reasons to either present a valid prescription at the time of purchase, or have their parent or legal guardian purchase it for them. Ohio would not be the first state to enact such restrictions, as at least 12 other states in the U.S. have passed similar legislation to protect their children. This small measure allows patients who need the medication to still obtain it, and can go a long way in preventing youth under the age of 18 from easily obtaining large quantities of dextromethorphan with the intention to abuse it.

Thank you for your consideration. As always, the OSMA appreciates the opportunity to be meaningful contributors to the legislative process. Please contact us with any questions you may have.