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**Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 601**  
**House Health Committee**  
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Committees

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Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to come before you today and present sponsor testimony on House Bill 601.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 5,232 people died of drug overdose deaths in Ohio between mid-2016 and mid-2017. These individuals came from each of our districts, and this epidemic continues to take lives across Ohio. During this General Assembly, we have all played a part in combatting the growing opioid epidemic from all angles. I believe that we have made great strides in the budget allocation of \$180 million for drug addiction care, the HOPES taskforce, and the various drug-related bills that have been introduced. I believe that HB 601 will help to further combat this growing problem.

Current language in section 4729.45 of the Ohio Revised Code allows an “opioid antagonist” to be administered to patients battling addiction. However, there are years of research that support the use of *injectable* medication-assisted treatments (MAT) in combatting opioid use disorder. These treatments are not always antagonists and, in some cases, are agonists so they are not currently available for patients. HB 601 broadens the language in section 4729.45 to allow MATs to be administered when treating drug addiction.

An injectable form of a medication approved by the FDA to treat opioid use disorder inherently reduces diversion, misuse, and abuse because the medication is never in the possession of the patient before administration. The bill also implements additional patient safeguards by requiring an administering pharmacist to obtain a prescription for the MAT from a treating physician, and blood and urine test results indicating that it’s safe to administer the MAT if the

patient is receiving their first dose, or after any gaps in treatment of more than 30 days.

As we are all aware, there is a shortage of health care practitioners in Ohio who treat patients with opioid use disorder. Currently, any prescriber who provides office-based MAT to more than 30 patients has to obtain a dangerous distributor license. This stigmatizes those who are treating patients with opioid use disorder. By exempting HCP-administered products from the 30-patient limit, we can encourage physicians to treat more patients with these types of medications.

Once again, Chairman Huffman and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on behalf of HB 601. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.