



To: Members, Ohio House Health Committee
From: William Resch, DO, President, OPPA and member, OSMA
Date: June 20, 2018
Subject: Continued Opposition to HB326

On behalf of the more than 1,000 members of the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA) and 15,000 members of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), I am writing to express continued concerns and strong opposition to House Bill 326. This bill would allow certain psychologists in Ohio to prescribe medications (without appropriate medical training) to Ohioans who have a mental illness and/or substance use disorder.

As we have stated previously, while our organizations understand the interest of lawmakers in wanting to address workforce issues and provide greater access to treatment for Ohioans who have a mental illness and/or addiction disorder, allowing inadequately trained psychologists to prescribe is not the solution.

We continue to maintain that the education, training, regulation and oversight proposed in the bill, as well as recent proposals by the proponents to address the woefully inadequate web-based psychopharmacology course (which can be completed in a psychologist's spare time), that psychologists will not have the medical training necessary (which physicians, advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants DO have) for them to safely prescribe medications.

Safe alternatives to increasing workforce issues include:

- increasing the utilization of telemedicine/telepsychiatry (including reimbursement);
- expanding upon and collaborative care models where clinicians work as a team to more fully integrate behavioral health into primary care practices; and
- enforcing mental health parity laws so that psychiatrists and psychologists can be reimbursed appropriately for services they have been trained to provide (many services are not covered or denied).

Ohioans with mental illness and/or substance use disorders deserve the same high-quality, safe prescribing by medically trained clinicians as those who have other medical conditions.

Thank you for your consideration of the concerns our organizations have. The OPPA and OSMA welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss further.