



STATE SENATOR
CHARLETA B. TAVARES

15TH DISTRICT

Sponsor Testimony
Presented by: Senator Charleta B. Tavares
Senate Bill 310
Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
Senator David Burke, Chair
Tuesday June 26, 2018

Good morning Chairman Burke and members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 310. Many Ohioans who suffer from opiate addiction first became addicted after they were 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 pain to avoid becoming addicted or relapsing. In our ongoing efforts to end the opioid epidemic, it is imperative that we are using every tool we have available to us. That is why I have introduced Senate Bill 310 which will do the following. It

would first require the Department of Health to develop a non-opioid directive form that would specify that a patient is not to be prescribed opiates for pain treatment; and the Department of Health would make the form free, easily accessible and downloadable via the Department's website. The form will be voluntary and may be revoked by the patient at any time. Next, it would require Physicians, Physician Assistants, Advanced Practice Nurses and Dentists to distribute information regarding evidence-based non-opioid therapies to the patient or patient's representative prior to prescribing opioids. Lastly, it would require health insurance plans to provide coverage for evidence-based non-opioid therapies such as chiropractic services, acupuncture, and osteopathic medicine.

Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Utah are all currently considering legislation that aim to empower patients with the tools they need to choose alternate pain management

options. The National Association of Attorney Generals sent a letter to America's Health Insurance Plans asking them to review and edit their coverage plans so that health care providers can prioritize non-opioid pain management options over opioid prescriptions for the treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain. It is time Ohio takes a proactive step in fighting the Opioid Epidemic by giving patients the tools they need to work hand in hand with our healthcare professionals so that the best health outcomes can be reached.

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 310. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.