



May 21, 2018

The Honorable Jay Hottinger
Chair, Senate Insurance & Financial Institutions Committee
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Hottinger,

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 members of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, I would like to express our opposition to Senate Bill 265, legislation that would recognize pharmacists as health care providers.

The Ohio Chamber recognizes that pharmacists are highly trained health professionals and are unique members of the health care team, in that they often have more regular interactions with patients than might other providers. We also recognize that, as the bill's sponsor, Sen. Matt Dolan, indicated in his sponsor testimony, pharmacists are an increasingly important part of the continuum of care whose role in direct patient care continues to grow and expand.

It is our understanding that, under current Ohio law, pharmacists may be unable to be reimbursed by health insurers for the services they provide and, thus, SB 265 explicitly authorizes insurers to pay or reimburse a pharmacist for providing any health care services they are legally authorized to provide. In general, the Ohio Chamber does not oppose such a change.

What concerns us is Sec. 3923.235 (A) of SB 265, which appears to require insurers to reimburse pharmacists without any restrictions or limitations. Such language makes this resemble an "any willing provider" provision that could interfere with insurers' ability to negotiate terms and conditions that are beneficial to consumers and plan sponsors.

Therefore, we urge amending the bill to ensure that only pharmacists who are "participating providers" – a term already present in Ohio law – and have a health care contract with an insurer are entitled to reimbursement for health care services rendered to an enrollee under the health care contract.

If such a change were made to SB 265, the Ohio Chamber would remove its opposition to the legislation. However, we oppose the current version of the bill. The ability of health plans to construct networks that include some, but not all, providers is an important tool to enhance competition and lower the cost of health insurance. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Lake". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Keith Lake
Vice President, Government Affairs

cc: Members of the Senate Insurance & Financial Institutions Committee