SB 265 Proponent Testimony
Stuart Beatty, RPh, PharmD, BCACP, FAPhA

Chairman Hottinger, Vice Chair Hackett, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Senate Insurance & Financial Institutions Committee, my name is Stuart Beatty, Associate Professor of Clinical Pharmacy at The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy. Today, I am here on behalf of myself and the Ohio Pharmacists Association (OPA) to give support for SB 265 and today's proposed amendment.

Over the course of the last year, OPA and Senator Matt Dolan have worked extensively with interested parties to refine language in SB 265 to better integrate pharmacists into health care teams so that we may be utilized in more meaningful ways to address our state's pressing public health issues. In the amended proposal, which now satisfies concerns of opponents, pharmacists will be treated like any other provider in the Ohio Revised Code, making them eligible for payment for services that are already allowed within the current law and scope of practice.

The language is permissive in that it allows health plans and state programs to credential pharmacists and authorize their ability to bill for services that go beyond their traditional role in medication dispensing. This language, and passage of SB 265 is extremely important in order to offer patients enhanced levels of care and evolve the role of the pharmacist.

As part of my role as a faculty member, I practice as an embedded pharmacist within a primary care practice at OSU. This is an innovative setting that is actively involved in health care transformation and training the next generation of physicians, nurses, and pharmacists to practice in a team-based environment. Within this setting, our pharmacists provide care to patients with diabetes, smoking cessation, and high blood pressure through our collaborative practice protocols. We provide comprehensive medication consults to physicians for patients taking more than 15 medications to ensure safe and effective prescribing. We contact patients within days of discharge to review medication changes and patient progress to assure access to patients that need to see a provider to prevent costly and unnecessary emergency department and readmissions to the hospital.

These are all services pharmacists can and should provide to patients, whether working in a physician office or a corner drug store. The current amendments of SB 265 will allow these types of services to become the norm across Ohio by allowing pharmacists to be recognized as health care professionals to provide these services.

I am originally from Greenfield, Ohio so I understand small town, rural Ohio. I can tell you through my work at The Ohio State University, the pharmacist's role is crucial, but pharmacists have so much more to offer patients, and SB 265 will help make that happen. By granting pharmacists the legal recognition that is enjoyed by physicians, nurses, chiropractors, dentists, podiatrists, and essentially every other health care professional, we can begin to evolve and integrate pharmacists more easily on the health care team. This will allow the citizens of Ohio to have access to a professional dedicated to safe and effective medication use, whether that person lives in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Greenfield, Burton, Edgerton, Oak Hill, or Urbancrest.

SB 265 will empower pharmacists to function at the top of their license, and as a result it will encourage new, innovative practice models that can help challenge the current system and yield better outcomes for the patients of Ohio.

I again would like to thank Senator Dolan for his tireless efforts on SB 265, and for his work to improve patient access to quality health care in Ohio. On behalf of the Ohio Pharmacists Association, we are proud to support amended SB 265, and we hope you will consider its passage.

Thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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