**Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 341**

**House Health Committee**

**October 22, 2019**

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Jones and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to come before you today and present sponsor testimony on House Bill 341.

A report from the Ohio Department of Health shows that in 2017, 4,854 Ohioans died from an unintentional drug overdose. The map on page 3 of my testimony depicts the Unintentional Overdoes Rate by county from 2012-2017. As you can see, these fatalities come from each of our districts and it is our responsibility as legislators to work together and fight this epidemic. I believe that this committee has introduced and passed life-saving legislation in the last two years that have made great strides in combating the opioid problem in Ohio. It is my hope that HB 341 will help further our efforts in preventing accidental overdoses in Ohio.

Current language in section 4729.45 of the Ohio Revised Code allows an “opioid antagonist” to be administered to patients battling addiction. HB 341 would expand on this by allowing for the use of injectable medication-assisted treatments (MATs) in combatting opioid use disorder. MATs could consist of antagonists, agonists, or a combination of both. This legislation would increase a patient’s access to addiction treatment in a way that is safe and overseen by medical professionals.

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. HB 341 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 Lipps and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on behalf of HB 341. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

