**Proponent Testimony**

**HB 412**

**Association of Ohio Health Commissioners**

**Beth Bickford, Executive Director**

Chairman Lipps, ranking member Boyd and members of the House Health Committee:

The Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC) is pleased to offer its support for House Bill 412, sponsored by Representatives Clites and Ginter. AOHC is the statewide nonprofit organization that represents the health commissioners of Ohio’s city, county and combined health districts.

HB 412 would create the Rare Disease Advisory Council and spell out specific charges of this council, with instructions to report findings to the legislature. The findings of this report will provide critical data surrounding rare diseases in Ohio, and, we believe, lead to the creation of substantive policy goals targeted towards those who are afflicted by these diseases.

We are asking for consideration of one amendment to HB 412, and that is to designate one seat on the council for a local health commissioner. Local boards of health staff administer and implement Ohio’s Children with Medical Handicaps (CMH) Program. Through this program, public health nurses coordinate care for Ohio’s most medically fragile children. They make sure appointments are made and kept, medications are properly administered, and medical professionals are working together to treat the rare diseases that afflict these children. As a result, the members of AOHC have strong experiences that can inform the work on this council. Just to give you a sense of the scope of this program, the Franklin County Health Department alone serves over 4,000 families. AOHC has worked closely with Reps. Clites and Ginter on this amendment and would urge this committee to include it in the bill.

Thank you for your consideration of the amendment and support of the legislation and would be happy to answer any questions.