*Sub House Bill 177*

*House Health Committee*

*Proponent Testimony*

*January 28, 2020*

*LaShelle Henderson, APRN, CNP*

*Family Nurse Practitioner, Primary Mental Health Nurse Practitioner*

*Chairman Lipps, Vice Chairman Manning Ranking Member Boyd & members of the House Health Committee, my name is LaShelle Henderson and I am honored to be given an opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 177, because I personally was affected as a consequence of Ohio’s Standard Care Arrangement (SCA) regulation that requires a signed physician contract for me to practice as an Advanced Practice Nurse and to provide mental health services to Ohioans in need in the communities of Cuyahoga & Lake County.*

*I have over 18 years of experience as a RN, and over 6 years of experience as Nurse Practitioner combined specializing in both family medicine and psychiatry. I have treated all age ranges. In Psychiatry alone I have provided care to age ranges of 3 years old to 90+. I began my career as a Family Nurse Practitioner who worked at an outpatient mental health center, due to the severe shortage of Psychiatric Providers. My caseload in the outpatient setting was over 500 patients. I have worked in this position since 2013. I have seen patients with many mental health diagnosis, including but not limited to adhd, depression, ptsd, anxiety, rad, odd, bipolar d/o, schizophrenia, post-partum depression, borderline personality d/o, autism, Asperger’s,etc.*

*In 2016, I was given the opportunity to work in an official Psychiatric Emergency room in a hospital. I was the 1st Nurse Practitioner to moonlight in this Psychiatric Emergency room. The Psychiatric Emergency would see an average of 400 patients per month that were in crisis. My role at the hospital also gave me the opportunity to perform Psych Consults on the medical floors. I would see an average 0f 6 -12 consults per day. While in my role I obtained my degree as a Primary Mental Health Nurse Practitioner to better serve the mental health community.*

*I remained dedicated in my position as a Psychiatric Consultant/Liaison. For greater than 3 years I successfully maintained professionalism and served my clients and their needs until September 16, 2019 when my assigned collaborator refused to sign my Standard Care Arrangement (SCA).*

*I was notified by management both in person and it writing that I was no longer able to work in my position due to me no longer having a collaborator, as it related to Ohio’s Standard Care Arrangement (SCA) regulation that requires a signed physician contract for me to practice as an Advanced Practice Nurse. As a result, I have been laid off for over 4 months from full-time employment and as a result of me no longer being employed patients have suffered.*

*While in my role serving mental health patients, I quickly learned that there was a shortage of providers. The average wait time for an initial psychiatric appointment in Cuyahoga County is 3-6 months due to lack of providers. I have personally seen; many patient’s being discharged from multiple inpatient psychiatric units with a wait time for a f/u appointment being greater than 3-4 weeks with their current provider and being discharged with only a 30-day supply of medications. I also witnessed many patients being discharged from multiple inpatient psychiatric units that were diagnosed with random psychiatric diagnosis including bipolar disorder, post- partum depression, schizophrenia, etc., (that included all age ranges) along with history of multiple suicide attempts having to wait greater than to 2 months for initial psychiatric appointments, when they were discharged from the hospital with only a 30-day supply of medications.*

*There is a greater demand for mental health providers due to an increased incidence of mental health diagnosis. According to Shane Ford (researcher for Ohio’s Primary Care office who is responsible for overseeing the shortage areas) there are about 4,000 designated mental health professional shortage areas in the U.S. with about 125 in Ohio.*

*The National Institute of Mental Health has noted that there is a national cohort of 49,000 Psychiatrist is aging ranking as the second oldest group of physicians and not as many young physicians are opting to enter the specialized field. In 2012 slightly less than 4% of graduating students choose Psychiatry. With this being documented, there will continue to be a shortage of psychiatric providers, and as a result this also means that there is a shortage of available Psychiatrist for Collaborators who are available and willing to sign the Standard Care Agreement (SCA) that is required for Advanced Practice Nurses in the state of Ohio.*

*Therefore as long as the incidence of mental health continues to be on the rise that there will continue to be disparities and lack of access to mental health providers, as long as the state of Ohio, continues to enforce the Standard Care Arrangement (SCA) regulation that requires a signed physician contract for an Advanced Practice Nurse to Practice.*

*Please take into consideration that the sooner a mental health patient is seen by a mental health professional the better opportunity that they will have for recovery with improved health and wellness. I am desperately asking that you consider the impact of health care inequalities involved in mental health by eliminating the Standard Care Agreement which would allow patients access to more providers. In closing I would like to thank each member of the Ohio House Health Committee personally; I am asking for your support of HB 177 to grant citizens with freedom to choose their own provider.*

*Sincerely,*

*LaShelle Henderson, APRN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC*