



To: Members of the Ohio House Health Committee

Fr: Monica Hueckel, Senior Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association

Da: November 18, 2020

Re: SB 252

---

On behalf of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), the state's oldest and largest professional organization representing Ohio physicians, medical residents, and medical students, we are writing today in support of Senate Bill 252, which would prohibit "fail first" coverage of drugs used to treat stage four advanced metastatic cancer. The provisions of this legislation would prohibit health plans that cover treatment of stage four metastatic cancer from making coverage of the drugs prescribed to treat cancer or associated conditions dependent upon failure to successfully respond to a different drug or a history of failing to respond to a different drug.

The OSMA believes that physicians should always have the authority to use the most effective, personalized and best (according to their professional judgment) treatment plans in the effort to fight advanced cancers in patients. The decision of what medication to prescribe relies on many case-by-case factors, such as the personal medical history of the patient. The 'fail first' requirement can mean letting the disease get worse as a patient tries a cheaper medication, before allowing the patient to have the medication his or her doctor feels is best in the first place. "Fail first" policies utilized by insurers can disrupt critically-needed treatment efforts and cause dangerous delays in appropriate treatment. Time is of particular importance in the treatment of advanced cancers and any delay in obtaining treatment that works best for the patient is a substantial risk.

Cancer patients are already navigating a challenging diagnosis that is physically, emotionally, and financially draining. These patients do not need the added burden of having to wait for their physician's recommended drug treatment or being forced to fail on another treatment before being given access to the originally-prescribed drug. SB 252 is a logical and empathetic proposal which will spare Ohio's advanced cancer patients from the hassle of "fail-first" policies, giving them fast access to the drug therapies which their physicians have selected and prescribed.

Thank you for your consideration of our statement on SB 252. As always, the OSMA is appreciative of the opportunity to be a meaningful contributor to the legislative process. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.