



## Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid

Witness Form

Today's Date: **5/15/2019**

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Organization Representing: **Faith In Public Life**

Testifying on Bill Number: **Amendment to Ohio Revised Code [3707.562](#)**

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both

Testifying As:  Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?  Yes  No

Chair Hackett, Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak with you about decreasing overdose deaths in our state. My name is Blyth Barnow, I am minister with Faith In Public Life, and I work with faith communities to respond to the current overdose crisis.

As faith leaders we have seen this crisis up close. We have buried far too many members of our congregations and lost members of our own family. We know we can do more to ease the grief and suffering of god's people, which is all people.

Community distribution of naloxone is key to decreasing overdose deaths. While being able to obtain naloxone at a pharmacy or Project DAWN site is wonderful, it is not most effective and it is not enough. Most people engaged in active drug use are wary of the shame and stigma they may face from medical providers and county staff. This is why it is critical for trusted community sites like churches and community centers to become sites of distribution.

Many churches and faith leaders are eager to take this work on, but current policy makes it nearly impossible. In the state of Ohio you are required to obtain a Terminal Distributor of Dangerous Drugs license in order to distribute naloxone, even though naloxone is a very safe medication. This license is standing in the way of true community distribution and I would like to speak in favor of amending Ohio Revised Code [3707.562](#) to include the phrase “and personally furnish” in section B and C. This would allow service entities, including faith communities, to distribute naloxone without a TDDD license. As it stands the code allows service entities to administer naloxone, but not to distribute it. This means that a pastor is authorized to use a naloxone kit to save someone’s life if they were to overdose in the sanctuary, but they are not able to give that same kit to a congregant as they leave the church.

There are many areas of the revised code that regulate naloxone distribution, including [4731.941](#), [4729.541](#), and [4729.514](#) any and all of these could be revised in order to strengthen community distribution efforts.

I recently partnered with the Ohio Council of Churches and the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Conference in order to pursue a community distribution grant through ODH, however we were forced to step back when we realized that we would be required to obtain a TDDD license for each site of distribution, meaning each one of our churches. The Ohio Council of Churches has over 4,000 churches and at about \$400 per license this is not feasible.

These changes cannot wait. In fact there are many in the state of Ohio that are currently distributing naloxone underground because they want to support their communities but cannot meet this licensure requirement. Let’s bring life saving work above ground. The lives on Ohioans depend on it. As faith leaders we know that all people are beloved by God and every life is worth saving. Please help us to do this critical work.

Thank you for your time.