



Ohio Chapter

Testimony of Jordee Wells, MD, FAAP *Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics* House Bill 166—State Operating Budget for FY20/21 May 28, 2019

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Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 166. My name is Dr. Jordee Wells and I am here today on behalf of the nearly 3,000 members of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

I want to touch briefly on several items in HB 166 that we support. Overall, we are excited about the many new child health investments being proposed in the budget. Our children are our greatest resource and Ohio pediatricians stand ready to ensure that these investments have a significant impact.

Our members are very excited by Governor DeWine's proposal to raise the age of purchase for tobacco and vapor products to twenty-one. Pediatricians nationwide are alarmed by the rise in e-cigarette use by children. According to data from 2018, 21% of high school students and 5% of middle school students reported having used an e-cigarette within a month of the survey; this is a 78% increase from the previous year. Children are often attracted to e-cigarettes due to the enticing candy or fruit flavors and attractive designs. Many children and adults also perceive that e-cigarettes are less harmful than traditional tobacco products.

Age of purchase laws have been shown to reduce youth smoking rates and have been adopted by a number of other states and Ohio communities. Raising the purchase age for all tobacco and nicotine products is an important intervention that will help curb the rise in smoking among teenagers. HB 166 provides an important step forward and we hope that you will maintain this provision.

We are also supportive of new investments and tax changes in the budget aimed at addressing lead exposure in Ohio. This is a major public health concern for Ohio children and we feel new funding for lead prevention activities at the Ohio Departments of Health and Medicaid as well as the proposed lead abatement tax credit will have an immediate and positive impact.

House Bill 166 includes several increases in funding for the Ohio Department of Health's Bureau of Children with Medical Handicaps and *Help Me Grow* Program, Early Intervention Services at the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and Student Wellness and Success funds at the Ohio Department of Education. These and other child health investments in HB 166 are critical and it is my hope that these funds can be preserved.

Finally, I want to make sure you are aware that the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics supports the work of the Ohio Hospital Association and Ohio Children's Hospital Association in seeking amendments to address provisions added to HB 166 that would negatively impact hospitals and providers. It is my hope that the Senate will accept these important changes and ensure that HB 166 remains focused on improving child health.

In closing, I appreciate the committee's detailed review of HB 166 and your focus on child health. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have, thank you for your time.