



TO: Members of the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee
FROM: Keith Kerns, Executive Director, Ohio Optometric Association
DATE: September 30, 2019
RE: Written Comments in Support of Substitute Senate Bill 97

On behalf of the Ohio Optometric Association, which represents nearly 70% of Ohio's Doctors of Optometry, thank you for the opportunity to convey our support for Substitute Senate Bill 97, sponsored by Senator Steve Huffman.

The OOA's primary eye care doctors are strong supporters of a transparent doctor-patient relationship, both in terms of the quality and cost-effectiveness of services, and the substitute version of Senator Huffman's legislation is an important step in improving the provider-patient relationship in the area of price transparency.

As you may know, the OOA worked to address the issue of price disclosure and transparency in the context of House Bill 156 last session. Under the leadership of then-Representative (and now Senator) Kirk Schuring, the OOA worked with vision plans on landmark legislation which provides patients more information on vision service and vision material costs to promote choice. Our association believes Senator Huffman's bill shares the goal of HB 156 regarding meaningful health care pricing transparency.

There are many versions and definitions of "price transparency" in today's health care marketplace. Providing true, impactful information to our patients requires a commonsense system that reflects the today's healthcare landscape. For instance, many times providers do not possess the data and information needed to provide a "real time" cost estimate to patients as a result of variations in third-party coverage and reimbursement. This is particularly true in vision care which includes both vision and medical insurance coverage. Accordingly, any administrative system which seeks to address the transparency issue must also contain a strong commitment by all parties involved in the healthcare system to work to provide patients data in this area.

While the issue of price transparency will continue to be discussed, our association believes Senator Huffman's Substitute SB 97 is a very positive step in addressing the issue and strengthening the provider-patient relationship. The OOA applauds the Senator's continued dedicated efforts in this area and pledges to continue to work with him and all members of the General Assembly on this crucial issue.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me or the OOA's Legislative Agents, Dan Leite and Courtney Saunders of Capitol Advocates, if you have any further questions or need additional information. Thank you for allowing our association to express our support for this important legislation.