



635 North Erie Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604-5317
419.213.4100
419.213.4017 Fax
boardofhealth@co.lucas.oh.us



Eric J. Zgodzinski, DrPH, MPH, RS, CPH
Health Commissioner

**LUCAS COUNTY
REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD MEMBERS**

Johnathon Ross, MD, President
Ted Kaczorowski, Vice President
Amr Elaskary
Richard Fernandez, DPT
Richard L. Munk, MD
Donald R. Murray
Susan Postal
Barbara Sarantou
Michelle Schultz
Donna A Woodson, MD

**AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
EMPLOYER**

The Department operates in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Visit us on the web at:
www.lucascountyhealth.com

Honorable Dick Stein
77 S. High Street
12th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

October 5, 2021

Dear Representative Stein,

I want to first thank you for your dedication to Ohio's legislative process and the rule of law. With my almost 30 years of experience in health and public health, I know that differences in methodology, strategies, and varying approaches on how to attack poor health outcomes have always occurred and will continue to occur.

Fortunately, what has not been in question is eliminating poor health outcomes for diseases such as polio, measles, smallpox, and other preventable diseases through the development and utilization of a vaccine. Since the first vaccine was introduced, issues of safety, misinformation, and the questioning of the vaccine efficacy have been a concern. In the end, these concerns became moot.

Unfortunately, with the COVID vaccinations the proliferation of misinformation that has led to fear over safety concerns and motive have only become stronger. Currently, lack of vaccination is a major barrier to preventing us from containing the spread of Covid-19. After a review of HB 435, it appears that it will only add to the longevity of COVID in our communities by discouraging vaccinations. Covid-19 has caused untold sickness in this country and hundreds of thousands of deaths, mostly all preventable with the use of vaccine. We recognize that we must learn to live with COVID in our midst, but should do so while denying it the footholds to the continuous waves of disease negatively affecting our economy, health care, and our children.

At this time, I would implore the legislature to find ways to encourage vaccinations rather than discourage them. Vaccines are the reason why we do not have diseases that our ancestors dealt with and one of the reasons we can live life the way we do. Unfortunately, due to the lower COVID vaccinations rates, the disease rate, and other concerns, we in Lucas County have seen hospitalizations of patients due to COVID-related illness surge. On July 6th of this year, we had four patients admitted to local hospitals, 1 in the ICUs and 0 were on ventilators. On October 5th of this year, we had 189 patients admitted, 73 in the ICUs, and 51 ventilators. Also, in September, Lucas County experienced a historical event never seen before where all of our hospitals were on patient bypass and essentially were not accepting patients during that time. This historical burden placed on our healthcare system is mainly from those who are not vaccinated.



635 North Erie Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604-5317
419.213.4100
419.213.4017 Fax
boardofhealth@co.lucas.oh.us

We, as a society, have become almost immune to the countless examples and stories of sickness and death related to Covid-19. However, we must not lose sight of the negative effect this vaccine-preventable disease is having on all facets of our lives and livelihoods. Businesses, organizations, and other employers are pleading to have the authority to make decisions that are right for the safety of their employees and the health of their business. They want to continue to have the ability to keep all employees safe from a disease that is preventable by use of safe and effective vaccine.

In closing it is hoped my statement will provide you with additional knowledge and insight on the challenges presented to the public's health by this Bill. I encourage you to vote no on HB 435.

I wish you the very best of health and success.

Eric J. Zgodzinski, DrPH, MPH, RS, CPH
Health Commissioner
Toledo-Lucas County Health Department



635 North Erie Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604-5317
419.213.4100
419.213.4017 Fax
boardofhealth@co.lucas.oh.us



635 North Erie Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604-5317
419.213.4100
419.213.4017 Fax
boardofhealth@co.lucas.oh.us