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May 25, 2022

Susan Manchester, Chair  
Ohio House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, and Ranking Member Denson,

My name is Andrew Beck, and I am a practicing primary care and hospitalist pediatrician at Cincinnati Children's. I have over 15 years' experience in caring for patients and am currently licensed to practice medicine in Ohio. It is with this experience that I write testimony in opposition to HB454.

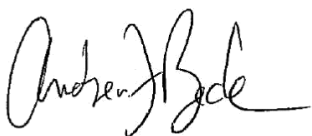
The Ohio General Assembly should leave the practice of medicine to licensed healthcare providers. I am gravely concerned that HB454 sets a dangerous precedent by interfering with medical decision making and parent/family autonomy to discuss care options in consultation with their child's medical provider. As I practice medicine, I perform a thorough evaluation on each patient and make treatment recommendations based on the best available evidence for that individual's situation. In my experience, parents/caregivers/family members do the best they can, often in difficult circumstances, to make decisions they believe are in their child's best interest. As a pediatrician, I strive to ensure shared decision making with my patients and their families. An example of this relates to initiation of medical therapies for conditions in my outpatient clinic or during an inpatient stay – daily controller medications for asthma or ADHD, new feeding regimens for children with poor weight gain.

HB454 would place medical professionals in an ethical dilemma: we would have to refrain from providing evidence-based care to patients struggling with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria or lose our medical license. **I cannot imagine another diagnosis where a state law would prohibit us from delivering evidence-based care. I cannot fathom why the legislature seeks to insert itself into those sensitive moments best met by the shared, meaningful space of a therapeutic relationship.**

In a time when the demand for child and adolescent mental health care is at its highest, HB454 makes the demand even higher. I address patients' mental health every day – both in our primary care center and on our inpatient medical units. Just a few weeks ago, I was the inpatient attending. I cared for several youth admitted following suicide attempts, requiring observation and medical clearance before transfer to our inpatient psychiatric facility. Our youth, including many with gender dysphoria, are struggling. This bill would increase that struggle – it is the antithesis of the child- and family-centered care I have been trained to provide. Indeed, I was trained to treat the whole child; ignoring a child's mental health or a diagnosis like gender dysphoria is simply not responsible care.

I implore you to vote no on HB454. This bill is both dangerous and sets a dangerous precedent.

Sincerely,



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Associate Professor and Attending Pediatrician, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center