

Good afternoon Chair Manchester , Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the Family, Aging and Human Service Committee. I am glad to finally be testifying today in support of House Bill 284, concerning patient hand hygiene which is one of the most vital pieces of legislation in Ohio. This is the second General Assembly I am introducing this bill because hand hygiene is a forever concern until it is addressed.

Proper hand hygiene has always been important, but in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic it is critically vital that healthcare patients and residents are taking measures to reduce and eliminate the spread of the virus.

This legislation was created in collaboration with Dr. Shanina Knighton who is a clinical nurse scientist and a scholar at Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Knighton has stated that the lack of widespread patient hand hygiene education is an issue that needs to be addressed to ensure that healthcare consumers know they have a right to practice while receiving care. There are many standards for hand hygiene for hospital staff, but none for patients.

My bill would require the Ohio Department of Health to establish and provide educational materials and guidelines regarding hand hygiene to all health care facilities.

These materials would be culturally appropriate and conveniently accessible for different groups of patients and residents to independently practice. Healthcare staff would also assist patients and residents who are unable to carry out the hand hygiene procedures should they have a physical or mental health condition prohibiting them from safe practice. Hand hygiene education would be enforced at meal times, when entering and exiting an area of the facility where patient care is provided, before and after touching a wound or medical device, after coughing or sneezing, and after urinating or having a bowel movement.

In closing, House Bill 628 is legislation aimed at making sure that we are educating and protecting all Ohioans, particularly those that are visiting or working within healthcare facilities. Now, more than ever our constituents need us to provide them with the resources to combat COVID-19 and other health risks. Families should be able to comfortably live, work, thrive, and retire here. This is our Ohio Promise and how we plan to work to make this promise a reality for each and every constituent.

I respectfully ask for this Committee's support on House Bill 628 and at this time I am willing to address any questions you may have. Thank you.

Juanita Brent  
State Representative  
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