

Eric Richmond
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Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 193
House Health Committee

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chairman Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and distinguished members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written interested party testimony on HB 193 today. My name is Eric Richmond, and I am the Director of Legal and Legislative Services for the Ohio Dental Association. As you may know, the ODA is the professional association of dentists in Ohio. We represent 70% of Ohio's practicing dentists with more than 5,000 member dentists across the state.

House Bill 193 is another positive step in putting an end to the opioid epidemic. Over the past few years many health professions have battled the epidemic by changing their prescribing habits in regards to opioids. In the practice of dentistry we have seen opioid prescriptions drastically decrease due to the awareness of the epidemic that the state and country are facing. In the latest data from the Ohio Board of Pharmacy the total doses of opioids have decreased by 48 percent from 2012 through 2019, a decrease of 378 million doses. Further, the total number of opioid prescriptions in that time period has decreased by 5 million. During this time period, the Ohio Dental Association has been actively engaged in ending the opioid crisis by being a partner in the Ohio Opioid Education Alliance and advocating for prescribing limits and mandatory opioid continuing education for the dental profession.

The Ohio Dental Association worked closely with the Ohio State Dental Board to develop and implement administrative rules that limit prescribing opiates for acute pain to 7 days for adults and 5 days for minors. Along with those limits, a prescriber must also educate any minor patient and their legal guardian on opioids before writing any prescription. Further, the use of the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System has given prescribers another tool to use when writing prescriptions. These actions have led to the decrease in opioid prescribing and will continue to combat the opioid epidemic.

House Bill 193 would mandate that every prescriber of schedule II drugs have an electronic prescription program without exception. To comply with this legislation a dentist would be forced to make a significant investment into electronic prescribing software. The majority of dentists across the state practice in small offices and are truly small business owners. The cost of an electronic prescribing system would be prohibitive for dental offices who are writing few schedule II drugs in their practices. The changes in prescribing practices of the dental community have been impactful and dentists across the state are committed to fighting the opioid epidemic. However, in certain cases a dentist must use their professional judgement and determine that it is in the patient's best interest to be prescribed a schedule II drug. These instances are limited but important in the care of patients with specific needs due to certain procedures. With this in mind we would ask that an exemption to the electronic prescription mandate be added. Any prescriber who writes less than 75 prescriptions of schedule II drugs per year would be exempt from the mandate.

The Ohio Dental Association is committed to fighting the opioid epidemic. The actions taken in the past few years have made a significant impact and will continue to have an impact in the future. While we understand the state moving towards mandated electronic prescriptions for healthcare providers who prescribe schedule II drugs we ask that an exemption to the mandate be put in place for providers who only write a handful of schedule II prescriptions per month.