

## HB 90 Proponent Testimon

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State and Local Government Reform Committee

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State and Local Government Reform Committee-

I am testifying today in **favor** of HB 90 as an Ohio resident who is deeply concerned about the courses of action being taken under the current emergency powers and the severe effects it is having on Ohioans.

We are now a few very short weeks away from a year from the initial measures taken to flatten the curve and slow the spread and yet we persist under mandates which at this point have been demonstrated to not do either of those things. We have instead experienced difficulties in access to medical and dental care, seen closures of clinics and other medical services due to now lack of funding, and seen tremendous socioeconomic impacts. I personally experienced my own non-covid related medical emergency the end of March shortly after things were closed. It was a situation where in normal circumstances I would have been recommended to get a certain type of rehab. This rehab was closed and was not offered to me until over 4 months later. Fortunately, I am someone knowledgeable in what type of rehab I required and had the ability to press on at home. But for many in the same situation, it is not just a physical rehab, but an emotional/psychological one as well as to not be fearful to continue to live life to the fullest. Not all can push through the challenges alone with their family, nor should they go without the benefit of skilled, trained physical therapists. My children required dental care which remained challenging to access and once available, offered under ridiculous circumstances. I do not fault the dentist because I know he was operating under requirements of the health department which frankly, made care much more challenging for him as well as his patients. I had a friend who required a specialized non surgical orthopedic care only to find that the clinic was closing due to inadequate funding. Friends received cancer screenings delayed or had parents who had delays in medical care resulting in delay in cancer diagnosis and subsequent limitations in available treatments. Autistic children were sent home from their specialized schools to get inadequate and impractical therapies via zoom and left to regress- something many cannot overcome once it occurs. I innumerate situations such as these to you because as a medical professional, I am appalled at the state of our state's health care. This has resulted in a decline across the board in seeking care and the care patients receive once they do seek care and is directly related to how the last almost year has been handled.

I have followed the data closely and watched both poor reporting measures as well as misrepresentations and even manipulation of presentation of it. All states were offered access to the CDC reporting software free of charge ( as they are for Fluview and Flunet) and yet our state chose to build its own- something that has not resulted in better reporting. Following our CSV files, there were gross inaccuracies and gaps in data. The definition of "case" was altered for this and the "probables" include patients found to be negative on testing and positive for other illnesses, and yet still counted against covid numbers. And yet this is what we were operating

mandates under? And killing businesses under? And losing access to other medical care? And altering education of children?

Our hospitals have always been able to care for all presented to them since last March. In fact, I know as someone who worked years in ICU nursing, it was not good to be less than 85% capacity as the hospital was not profitable. And yet, here our hospitals are functioning at or below this, resulting in lay offs of nurses and other health care workers. Never have I ever seen hospitals respond in the way the ones here in Ohio have. Every flu season as the potential to be severe, to put a strain on beds. Yet other years, they have found a way to manage this situation for the influenza- even if they did need to convert other facilities short term for increased bed numbers. The focus should have been on planning for the wave expected in the fall/winter when one would expect seasonal flu ( which does still exist) in addition to covid patients. The plan *never* should have been ridiculous curfews or further impacts on travel or daily life.

We the people need to have a voice in this situation and any others arising that are similar. We need our representatives active and involved in decisions affecting Ohioans at such drastic proportions. Medical professionals from the community should be able to come voice their concerns and their insights. We should not be relying on a few handpicked-by-the-governor professionals to be the only voices heard. There are others in the state like me who have 20 years of experience and worked through tough seasons of illness and even the prior H1N1 pandemic who have been trying to express our concerns on the data reporting, the lack of true science in the mandates, the access to care issues for other diagnoses ,etc and who feel like our voices are not being heard. Please **support HB 90** and put the power back in the hands of the people and their representatives- where it belongs. Thank you.