

To: Members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee

Fr: Monica Hueckel, Senior Director, Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association

Da: May 13, 2021

Re: HB 110 - SC3546

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On behalf of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), the state's oldest and largest professional organization representing Ohio physicians, medical residents, and medical students, I am writing today to express our support for an amendment to the House Bill 110 budget language (Amendment SC3546) concerning Ohio's tobacco cessation efforts and the ability of pharmacists to dispense tobacco cessation drugs.

The as introduced language in HB 110 sought to allow pharmacists the ability to dispense prescription tobacco cessation drugs without a prescription. The goal behind the inclusion of this provision was to create an additional opportunity for Ohio Medicaid recipients to have access to medications to help quit their use of tobacco. OSMA shares the goal of lowering incidence of tobacco use and improving health outcomes across the state. However, the provisions as introduced were written in a way that would have actually precluded Medicaid from providing coverage for the tobacco cessation drugs dispensed. OSMA also expressed concerns regarding the specific tobacco cessation drugs the provision would apply to, the negative impact those drugs could have on certain patients, as well as the communication between pharmacists and physicians about products dispensed under this proposal.

Amendment SC3546 optimizes the language to ensure that it achieves its intended goal and also addresses OSMA's concerns by establishing a protocol between a physician and a pharmacist and only applies to pharmacist dispensing nicotine replacement therapy products, rather than tobacco cessation drugs (which, for example, might present troubling patient safety risks due to potential serious side effects). Additionally, to ensure continuity and coordination of care, the new language shortens the timeframe in which the patient's primary care physician must be notified of the product dispensed to the patient from within 30 days to within 72 hours.

OSMA is thankful for the consideration of our concerns in the development of SC3546. We believe that the amendment will better address the problem and help Medicaid patients to access and afford the safest and most common medications recommended to help them quit smoking.

Thank you for your attention to our comments on this amendment and for the opportunity to be a meaningful contributor to the legislative process. Please feel free to reach out to us should you have any questions.