



The Honorable Stephen Huffman  
Chair, Ohio Senate Health Committee  
1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

March 16, 2021

**RE: Support for HB 9 (Koehler) - Prohibiting Sales of Dextromethorphan to Minors**

Dear Chairman Huffman,

On behalf of the healthcare and anti-substance abuse coalition listed below, respectfully urge your support for HB 9 - legislation which would prohibit the sale of over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicine containing the ingredient dextromethorphan (DXM) to individuals under the age of 18. We commend Representative Koehler for introducing this legislation, and we strongly support his efforts to prevent the intentional abuse of cough medicine containing DXM.

When used as directed, DXM is a safe and effective cough suppressant found in leading cough and cold products. Used by millions of Americans every year, DXM is non-narcotic, has no pain-relieving properties, and is not physically addictive. However, a small but significant number of teens admit to abusing dextromethorphan to get high. In fact, the results of the 2020 National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future survey showed a slight increase in OTC cough medicine abuse.<sup>1</sup> When ingested in high dosages - as much as 25 times the recommended amount - harmful side effects can occur, including confusion, dizziness, double or blurred vision, slurred speech, loss of physical coordination, vomiting, and rapid heartbeat.

Age 18 restrictions as laid out in HB 9 have proven an effective means of limiting access to the small teen population likely to abuse cough medicine. Twenty states<sup>2</sup> - including neighboring Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, have passed similar legislation, giving parents greater control over the medicine to which their children have access.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/trends-statistics/monitoring-future>

<sup>2</sup> Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nevada, New Jersey, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin

For these reasons, the organizations listed below respectfully urge you to **support HB 9**, helping to prevent abuse of DXM by teens in the Buckeye State. Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Carlos Gutierrez  
Vice President, State & Local Government Affairs  
Consumer Healthcare Products Association



Melissa Wervey Arnold  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ohio Chapter - American Academy of  
Pediatrics



Sarah Kincaid  
Director of Policy and Advocacy  
Ohio Children's Hospital Association



Cc: Senate Health Committee  
The Honorable Kyle Koehler, Ohio House of Representatives