

November 28, 2022

Ohio Senate
Health Committee

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on H.B. 558. My name is Carol Risaliti and I am the Executive Director of Beacon Charitable Pharmacy in Canton, Ohio.

Beacon Charitable Pharmacy is a nonprofit central fill community pharmacy that currently serves Stark, Carroll, and Lorain counties. Beacon accepts donations from the Ohio Drug Repository and 95% of the more than 26,000 prescriptions filled last year were filled by using Drug Repository medications.

Citizens of Ohio who have access to a pharmacy and their necessary prescription medications each and every month are more adherent in using the medications as prescribed by their physician. Healthy Outcomes are optimized when an individual interacts with a pharmacist who will provide Medication Therapy Management, education, and support. The primary healthcare professionals many underserved individuals see is the pharmacist.

The passing of HB 558 will have an impact on the health and wellness of many lives by permitting consumers to donate life-sustaining and lifesaving medications that otherwise would be destroyed. These medications are especially important in assisting individuals with managing chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart, hypertension, asthma, and COPD. Many times, the medications being offered are a 90-day supply from mail-order pharmacies (PBMs) or a 90-day supply name brand medication from a drug manufacturer Patient Assistance Program (PAP).

Residents of Ohio who are uninsured or underinsured, low to moderate income and do not have access to medications and pharmacy services are more likely to have increased emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and frequent physician visits, and this consequently increases the cost of health care for Ohio. Often individuals must choose between paying the rent, utilities, shoes for their children, food or using their limited consumable income for their medications.

There are numerous examples of patients needing multiple medications and often it is a high-cost medication to successfully maintain their stable health when released from a hospital. The Charitable Pharmacies in Ohio do not have access to adequate supplies of medications and HB 558 would provide a vital source for these medications.

Beacon, as do other charitable pharmacies in Ohio receives multiple calls, or visits each week asking us to accept the donation of their medication that they no longer are prescribed or the medications of their loved ones who have died. These residents of Ohio know clearly the expense of these medications and want to be respectful of the value they have not just monetarily but in specifically helping the less fortunate to receive medications they may otherwise go without. When it is a call or visit of a family member of the deceased it is more emotional and the plea is passionate as they want to do something “good, in the memory of their loved one”. HB 558 is more than just allowing charitable pharmacies to receive end-user medications; it allows the community to reduce the waste of vital resources and Ohioans to help each other.

Chair Huffman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would welcome any questions you might have at this time.

Sincerely,

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