



CHARITABLE HEALTHCARE NETWORK

Ohio: Stronger. Healthier. Together.

HB 558 Testimony – Jason Koma – Charitable Healthcare Network

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee, I am Jason Koma, the executive director of the Charitable Healthcare Network (CHN). Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 558.

Formerly known as the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, the Charitable Healthcare Network is the statewide association of free and charitable providers in Ohio. Our mission is to support our 52 members by working to strengthen and ensure high-quality healthcare for people who are vulnerable in our state.

Our member clinics and charitable providers are the backbone of the safety net in Ohio. In 2021, CHN members provided nearly 440,000 different healthcare services for free or at little to no cost for Ohioans. These services include primary care, specialty care, social services, education and pharmaceutical care, among others. The vast majority of healthcare services provided by CHN members are prescriptions for patients who simply have no other place to go to receive life-saving medications. All totaled, this care provided by CHN members was valued at nearly \$183 million in 2021.

Since coming on board at CHN in August, I have had the opportunity to travel the state to witness these free and charitable providers in action. I stand before you to say that seeing the way each community responds to providing care for the most vulnerable is a humbling experience. I would like to take the time to invite all of you to come to tour a clinic or charitable provider in your District. It is truly servant leadership at work.

During my meetings with these CHN members, whether was Ashland or Akron or Cincinnati, the number one current legislative issue that I have heard about is HB 558. It is very frequently that these providers have to turn away a well-meaning member of the community looking to donate much-needed and expensive medication.

Again, our network is made up of organizations whose communities are responding to help the most vulnerable in their community in their own way, and under current law, individuals in these communities are not able to assist in the best possible way. This bill helps change that.

In short, by addressing a lack of medication access for Ohio's uninsured and underinsured, HB 558 will help improve Ohio's safety net.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Phone: 614.914.645

Email: info@charitablehealth.or

Website: www.charitablehealth.or