



Sean Rhiney, Director, Government Relations, Xavier University
HB 629 Proponent Testimony
House Finance Committee
June 20, 2024

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, my name is Sean Rhiney, and I am testifying on behalf of Xavier University in support of HB 629 and the inclusion of Xavier's new College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) in the proposed operating appropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2025.

On behalf of Xavier, we first want to thank the House Finance Committee, our Southwest Ohio House Members, and the Cincinnati Business Committee's Task Force for advancing our groundbreaking project originally in HB2 as a priority for One Time Strategic Community Investment Funding. We are confident this proposed investment directly answers the Legislature's call for community projects that are meaningful and transformational investments that will positively affect the lives of Ohio citizens.

We view Xavier's COM as a true public project that will bring Ohio its first medical school in over 45 years. Much has changed as our population has grown since that time, including our critical primary care healthcare workforce needs. Ohio has a clear and documented need for more physicians, especially primary care physicians. National data warns us that Ohio will have a deficit of 631 primary care physicians by 2030. We also know that thousands of qualified and talented aspiring physicians are left without an opportunity to enter medical school because of limited seat availability. Osteopathic Medicine is one of the fastest-growing health-care professions in the nation. 1 in 4 U.S. medical students attend an osteopathic medical school. Xavier's COM will help alleviate this regional and national need for physicians, particularly osteopathic physicians statistically more inclined to family practice (rather than specialties) and working in less affluent, rural areas.

We also recognize this proposed appropriation by the state as a direct response to Ohio's healthcare needs along with existing investments and incentives the Legislature and Governor DeWine have made to increase the state's healthcare workforce. As early as 2031, our DO graduates will be able to play a critical role in helping Ohio address its physician shortage. According to AACOM data, more than 73% of osteopathic physicians practice in the state where they do their residency training, with the number rising to 86% when they also attend medical school in the state.

This is Xavier University's first capital construction request in our long history in Ohio. Construction of the new College of Medicine will be a \$109.5M capital project. Private fundraising has generated over half of the funds needed, and the proposed capital appropriation will close the gap, allowing Xavier to proceed with the project on time, and break ground in late 2024. More importantly, this proposed appropriation will be impactful by reducing project debt service and allowing Xavier to seek private dollars to increase scholarships and financial assistance that will make the COM accessible and attractive to students from Ohio and nationally.

Further, the State of Ohio will realize short and long term economic returns on Xavier's most significant societal investment in Ohio. The Legislature's proposed appropriation will have an immediate return on investment for Ohio taxpayers during the construction phase alone which is projected to generate close to \$125.5 million in economic impact (including \$3.2M in state and local tax revenue), as well as support



742 jobs over the two-year construction period. By 2038, the short and long-run operational and spending impacts created by the COM will have generated 350 jobs and a total economic impact on the Ohio economy of \$548.9 million in added income.

Xavier University greatly appreciates the House's work on this budget bill and is grateful for this proposed investment in our University and Southwest Ohio. We look forward to a continued partnership that improves healthcare access and outcomes for all Ohioans.

Very truly yours,

Sean L. Rhiney

Sean L. Rhiney, Esq.

Director, Government Relations