



December 4, 2023

Ohio House Bill 136: Authorize the operation of remote dispensing pharmacies

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chairwoman Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and Members of the Ohio House Health Provider Services Committee:

Thank you for your interest in expanding access to pharmacy care through the use of technology. The utilization of technology to aid in pharmacy services has existed for decades and the importance of embracing demonstrably safe technology to aid pharmacists in providing services to patients can be seen in many forms. Technological allowances, where permitted, enable pharmacists to regulate and evenly distribute prescription processing workload. The ensuing reduction in the variability of an individual pharmacist's workload enables that pharmacist to focus on direct patient care services that have been critical in preservice public health in recent years.

Telepharmacy, where allowed by state law, is an important technologically facilitated arrangement that increases access to pharmacy services. The practice has been demonstrated as a safe means for patient access to medications for over 20 years, with nearly half of all states incorporating a form of telepharmacy dispensing. Telepharmacy is an innovative method of providing medication access that serves to increase and maintain pharmacy days hours of operation to meet patient needs. Additionally, by enabling the use of remote supervision of pharmacy dispensing by a licensed pharmacist, Telepharmacy provides a safe option for sustainable prescription dispensing access in rural and urban underserved areas.

While the benefits of enabling Telepharmacy practice are clear, the current legislation sets arbitrary restrictions that impede the overall goal of expanding access to pharmacy care. Milage to another pharmacy and prescription volume limitations have no bearing on patient safety and should be removed to realize the stated intention of the legislation – to improve patient access. Access to transportation is a well-known and often discussed issue in the legislature. Setting milage restrictions would serve as an impediment to patient access for those with transportation challenges. Similarly, establishing prescription volume limitations is counterproductive to the stated goal of increasing patient access to care. As the volume of prescriptions filled at a Telepharmacy rises above the number selected, the discontinued allowance would have a direct impact on the growing number of patients utilizing the conveniently accessible Telepharmacy. If these arbitrary restrictions remain within the proposed legislation, it will likely render the allowance inoperable as it has in other states with similar obstructions. We encourage the Committee to consider the increased access that removing these restrictions would provide to patients across Ohio.

CVS Health is community-based and locally focused, engaging consumers with the care they need when and where they need it. In Ohio, CVS Health operates more than 350 retail locations with nearly 12,000 employees. CVS Health is the nation's premier health innovation company helping people on their path to better health. Whether in one of its pharmacies or through its health services and plans, CVS Health is pioneering a bold new approach to total health by making quality care more affordable, accessible, simple, and seamless.

On behalf of CVS Health, I thank you for allowing us to provide our comments of support for consideration.

Sincerely,

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