



State Representative Tim Barhorst

*House Bill 49 Sponsor Testimony
House Insurance Committee
March 1st, 2023*

Chair Lampton, Ranking Member Miranda and members of the House Insurance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 49 or the Hospital Price Transparency Act.

For far too long, consumers and patients have had to make significant financial decisions despite an asymmetry of information regarding the costs of services & products provided by hospital systems. I consider it *common sense* that a patient should be able to know exactly how much they have to pay before making a decision that concerns their health or medical well-being.

This standard of transparency should not be considered alien, profound, or even burdensome. I ask my distinguished colleagues of this committee to think of any business, sector, or industry where the consumer is expected to make a purchase or enter into a voluntary exchange without seeing the price tag beforehand.

Let me be clear, the intent behind this bill is not to target Ohio hospitals whether as businesses or entities that provide cutting-edge, life-saving treatments, procedures, and other services with global reputations. I am very much willing and open to bring everyone to the table – hospitals, consumer advocates, and healthcare providers alike. However, the fact that only 20-25% of the largest hospital systems in the United States are deemed compliant with federal transparency requirements is unacceptable - Ohio must close this gap within our own border.

Codifying federal requirements, re-asserted by three Presidential Administrations, will allow “standard charges” such as gross charges, discounted cash prices, payer-specific negotiated charges, and de-identified minimum & maximum negotiated charges from hospitals to be presented to consumers through:

1. Machine readable file (a file that can be read by a computer system)
2. Consumer-friendly display of procurable services

Consider the implications this bill will have towards our efforts to make Ohio a competitive place to live, work, and play. Our state can join many others who have either enacted similar legislation or are joining us in doing so. Taking this opportunity of modernizing the Ohio healthcare system through transparency will allow our state to take advantage of opportunities. Thus, incentivizing business & people to remain or come to our great State of Ohio.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 49. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

