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HB 505 Proponent Testimony
House Insurance Committee
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Chairman Lampton, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the House Insurance Committee, my name is Michelle Weiss, and I am testifying on behalf of the Ohio Hematology Oncology Society in strong support of House Bill 505, the Community Pharmacy Protection Act. Our society represents over 220 oncology and hematology providers in Ohio dedicated to caring for patients with cancer and blood disorders, and we believe this bill is essential for ensuring our patients have consistent access to their medications.

Support for Prohibition on Additional Accreditation Requirements

House Bill 505 seeks to prevent health plan issuers from imposing accreditation standards or certification requirements that are inconsistent with or beyond those set by the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy (BOP). Our members share with me that health plan issuers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) are requiring as a condition of participation in the health plan/MCO network that our members who have onsite pharmacies must meet unnecessary accreditation and certification standards specific to the plan and which are above and beyond the accreditation required by the BOP. This straight up money grab by the health plans and MCOs is costing pharmacies tens of thousands of excess dollars for unnecessary accreditations. Eliminating this practice is crucial for maintaining access to smaller community and practice-based pharmacies that are vital to patient care, particularly in underserved areas.

Ensuring Fair Reimbursement Practices

The bill mandates that PBMs reimburse pharmacies at least the actual acquisition cost of the drug plus a dispensing fee set by the Superintendent of Insurance. This provision helps sustain the financial health of community pharmacies, ensuring they can continue to provide essential medications to our patients.

Transparency in Drug Pricing

H.B. 505 requires PBMs to submit monthly reports detailing drug acquisition costs. This transparency will address opaque pricing practices, leading to fairer pricing and better regulatory oversight, ultimately benefiting patients who depend on these life-saving drugs.

Legal Recourse for Violations

The bill allows pharmacies and individuals affected by violations to seek compensatory damages and equitable relief. This provision ensures accountability and provides a mechanism to address grievances effectively.

Implications for Medicaid Managed Care

For Medicaid managed care, the bill ensures fair reimbursement and prohibits additional accreditation requirements. This is particularly important for Medicaid patients, who often face significant health challenges and financial constraints, ensuring they have uninterrupted access to necessary medications.

Conclusion

The Ohio Hematology Oncology Society strongly supports House Bill 505. This legislation ensures fair practices, transparency, and equitable access to medications across Ohio. We urge the committee to favorably consider this bill to protect and strengthen our community pharmacies, ensuring all patients receive the care and medications they need.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

OHOS Board Members

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