



Meredith Craig, Director of Healthcare Policy
Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Proponent – HB 397
June 5, 2024

Chairman Mathews, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments in support of House Bill 397. My name is Meredith Craig, and I am the Director of Healthcare Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

As you may know, the Ohio Chamber has served as the state's leading business advocate, and we represent over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

HB 397 would require the Ohio Department of Health to work with the Ohio Department of Aging, the commission on minority health, and other community organizations to incorporate Alzheimer's and dementia awareness information into relevant public health outreach.

The intent is to educate health care providers, community organizations, and the public about cognitive impairment, including:

- Early warning signs.
- Identifying and reducing risk factors.
- Importance of early detection and diagnosis, and assessment tools that can be used.
- Importance of an annual Medicare wellness visit for individuals 65 and older.

As outlined in the Ohio Chamber's [*Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future*](#), Alzheimer's disease is a growing public health crisis in the nation and in Ohio. The impact of Alzheimer's is projected to rise, with recent data showing 220,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's in Ohio. Approximately, 11.6% of people aged 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline in Ohio.

To combat this, one of the blueprint recommendations is to improve health literacy to help people develop confidence to act on that knowledge, and the ability to work with and support others. This can be best achieved through community-based educational outreach. Ohio's business community would benefit from strengthening and supporting state and local health agencies to eliminate health disparities. By promoting early detection and prevention strategies, businesses can reduce the financial and emotional burdens associated with long-term care, thereby decreasing reliance on Medicaid services. This proactive approach not only helps eliminate health disparities but also ensures a more productive and engaged workforce, ultimately driving economic growth and stability within the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 397. The Ohio Chamber is supportive of this proactive and educational measure to help sustain a healthy and robust workforce.