



June 12, 2024

The Honorable Stephen A. Huffman
Chair, Senate Health Committee
1 Capitol Square
Ground Floor 040
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senator Huffman and members of the Senate Health Committee:

On behalf of The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy (OSUCOP) and our institution's over 60 pharmacists, I respectfully write in strong opposition to House Bill (HB) 73 and the proposed substitute bill, 1_135_0502-6. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in continued dialogue on this bill. However, I have the same concerns with the proposed substitute bill as with the original legislation and am writing to formally **oppose this legislation**.

The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy (OSUCOP) is a top 10 ranked program in the country and trains over 500 student pharmacists per year in the Doctor of Pharmacy program as well as hundreds more students in undergraduate and graduate programs. Our faculty are innovative and nationally recognized practitioners moving the needle on care outcomes for patients through pharmacist-provided, interprofessional care.

I respectfully write in strong opposition to HB73. HB73 will require a pharmacist to fill off-label prescriptions without regard to ensuring the medication is appropriate and safe for the patient. Off-label prescribing is a common practice that involves a provider writing a medication prescription for an indication that is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). However, what is uncommon about HB73 is the precedent set by requiring pharmacists to fill any prescription for an off-label indication, thus removing pharmacists' professional judgment from the clinical review and dispensing process and potentially jeopardizing patient safety. The safe prescribing and dispensing of medications require extensive training and a deep understanding of patient-specific factors, including how medications interact with each other and how they are affected by a patient's condition, including acute changes in the patient's health.

This precedent also removes a pharmacist's professional judgment from the dispensing process by requiring the off-label prescription dispense without allowing for the full pharmacist-led clinical review. Not only does HB73 undermine the role of pharmacists across our state, but most importantly, it threatens the safety of Ohio citizens. Pharmacists play a key role in our healthcare system, ensuring the safe and effective use of medications for patients. Our dedication and expertise are critical in safeguarding public health; in the past several years, pharmacists administered over 300 million vaccines resulting in markedly decreased hospital admissions and deaths.¹ Pharmacists are knowledgeable and experienced in all matters concerning the use of medications. Our involvement goes far beyond filling prescriptions; for

¹ Grabenstein JD. Essential services: Quantifying the contributions of America's pharmacists in COVID-19 clinical interventions. JAPhA. 2022;62(Nov-Dec):1929-1945.E1. doi.org/10.1016/j.japh.2022.08.010



each prescription dispensed, pharmacists meticulously review patients' medical histories, allergies, potential drug interactions and contraindications. Through standardized curriculum requirements in Doctor of Pharmacy programs, pharmacists are trained in the relevant areas of patient assessment and clinical decision-making.² Pharmacists receive the second-most education of any health care professional, including 1,740 clinical practice hours before receiving their degrees. Many pharmacists pursue additional postgraduate training in the form of residency and fellowship programs in their desired area of practice, all of which prepares them to provide the necessary clinical judgment surrounding the safe and effective use of off-label prescribing.

HB 73's requirement to dispense by a pharmacist is in direct conflict with the pharmacists' corresponding responsibility and liability for the prescribing and dispensing when the medication dispensing poses a direct risk for the patient based on objective, good faith, and scientific information.

The practice of pharmacy is currently regulated by the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy. The existing framework of laws and regulations in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) and Ohio Revised Code (ORC) are overseen by the Board and ensure the highest standard of patient safety. To that end, pharmacists have a corresponding responsibility to ensure a prescription is issued for a legitimate medical purpose. Proposed changes brought forth by HB73 undermine this system and threaten patient safety in the state of Ohio.

The negative impact of HB73 on the safe and effective use of medications cannot be overstated. I **urge you to stop any further discussion or voting on this bill and oppose HB73**. Thank you for your consideration. If there is anything I can do to help related to HB73 or other healthcare-related legislation, please contact me at my email below.

Sincerely,

Deanna Kroetz, BS Pharm, PhD
Dean and Professor
The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy
kroetz.3@osu.edu

² ACPE PharmD Program Accreditation Standards. ACPE. 2016. <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/Standards2016FINAL2022.pdf>