

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide my personal opponent testimony on House Bill 73.

My name is Beth Helwig Carlson and I am a twenty-eight year cancer survivor. I am writing to express my concern that House Bill 73 will harm Ohioans and negatively impact patient safety.

In my cancer journey I received a Stem Cell transplant at University Hospitals of Cleveland and participated in several clinical trials. During this process, I was very ill and in order to survive I had to TRUST my medical team to make decisions including which drugs best suited my situation. One of the most valuable members of my medical team was my Pharmacist, Dr. Crieger. While other members of my medical team changed throughout my transplant, my Pharmacist was the ONE constant. EVERY single day. He was there overseeing which drugs were best suited for my care. The danger of House Bill 73 is it removes patient protections by **requiring** pharmacists to dispense any prescription for an off-label use of a medication that they receive, even when it would harm their patient. Taking the pharmacists out of the drug dispensing process is not only dangerous, it is unethical. Pharmacists have extensive medical training and are by law required to stay current on drugs and their availability. They are the people in the background who quietly monitor the decisions made by others on the medical team and are the true patient advocates. I watched my pharmacist time and time again be the check and balance for my medical care. As I have emerged from being in the hospital setting and taken back my life, I now see many specialists who all inquire about my medications. Some have made recommendations that conflicted with other medications that I was taking and I suffered severe side effects. Again, it was my PHARMACIST who caught the dangerous drug interactions and saved my life. House Bill 73 removes protections that are keeping us safe from irresponsible and inappropriate prescribing of off-label prescriptions. In preventing pharmacists from refusing to dispense medications on the grounds of scientific objection, House Bill 73 removes the last line of defense for patients and, in doing so, will undoubtedly lead to harm.

One of my biggest concerns about House Bill 73 is that it emboldens dangerous prescribers, providing them with temporary privileges and turning Ohio patients into research guinea pigs. While medical trials are important in transforming medications to meet the changing needs of patients and the changes in knowledge of diseases, those trials should be conducted under the strict policies already in place. Even when I was faced with a terminal illness, I had the right to sign off on a clinical trial if I chose to be part of research. Mandating pharmacists to automatically prescribe off label medications takes the choice out of my hands. As a patient I am no longer able to make decisions regarding my own health. House Bill 73 creates legal infrastructure for our most vulnerable individuals and opens up the opportunity for misinformation rather than scientific study to guide decision making. The bill allows temporary providers to go around a patient's treatment team, prescribe medicines that are inappropriate in terms of dose or risk of side effects, and force a pharmacist to dispense

these medicines. Nothing would stop these outside providers from prescribing chemotherapy to treat a bloodstream infection, using experimental medication cocktails without any scientific support, or using doses of medicines that turn them into toxins. House Bill 73 would turn patients into research guinea pigs for prescribers who want to perform research upon them, without going through the appropriate channels set in place since the Nuremberg code was established in 1948. Having participated in clinical trials myself I know first hand the requirements needed to participate and as a science teacher I appreciate and respect the scientific process that is required before establishing new protocols. Abandoning this check and balance is dangerous for ALL Ohioans.

Lastly, Senate Bill 73 is dangerous because allowing any individual provider to have complete control over the use of one medication means that organizations will not be able to effectively respond to medication supply issues. This leads to issues in medication ordering, shortages and stewardship. Thoughtful prescribing of medications is key for the long-term health of our patients and state, but House Bill 73 abandons these principles by forcing individual pharmacists to obtain and dispense any medication ordered regardless of scientific appropriateness, availability, and established guidance for optimal use. We live in a society that is bombarded by advertisements in all forms of our media and taking the internet's advice on drugs and supplements is dangerous. There are good reasons for the pharmacy profession and once again, they serve as the check and balance for their patients.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the Senate Health Committee regarding the dangers of House Bill 73. I view my pharmacists as the most trusted members of my care team and owe my life to their ability to make decisions based upon the scientific evidence presented in front of them. They provide the check and balance that allows medical care in Ohio to be world renowned. Please reject House Bill 73 on the grounds that it weakens healthcare in Ohio and sends us down a dark and dangerous path.