

April 8, 2025

**RE: Non-Expert Testimony for Raising CVD Health Awareness**

**TO: Chairman Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeters, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written, non-expert testimony in support of House Bill 104.

Cardiovascular (CVD) disease is a leading cause of death in the United States. House Bill 104 would establish a Cardiovascular Health Awareness Day in Ohio. A day of heightened awareness on this topic would serve to unite and engage our communities by focusing on the education, and prevention of this deadly disease while promoting strategies to restore health and adopting healthier lifestyles among Ohioians.

Though I am not an expert in the area of CVD, I have a bachelors degree in Nursing from The Ohio State University, a master's degree from Case Western Reserve University and hold a nationally recognized nursing certification in Ambulatory Care. My healthcare experiences are based on years of diverse nursing service. I have worked in Intensive Care Units, Substance Abuse Recovery, academia and held roles Patient Advocacy and Senior Executive Leadership.

A month ago, I retired from a 42 year professional nursing career. Thirty-four of these years were spent employed in healthcare settings working with and advocating for our nation's heroes, the men and women who served in the armed forces.

Research indicates CVD ranks high among the diseases plaguing our veteran population and is significantly rising among women Veterans. For instance, a 2014 article in The International Journal of Preventive Medicine provided research of veterans over a 20 year period with results concluding, "Veterans were at a higher risk of having a new onset of heart disease compared to non-veterans". The research study went on to explain "Veterans have higher rates of mental illnesses such as depression and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) which are associated with an increased risk of CVD". (Dr. Shervin Assari, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture, and Health, University of Michigan School of Public Health, 1415 Washington Heights, 2847-SPH I, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2029, USA.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4085922/#abstract1>)

The results of the previously mentioned study supported my own personal healthcare experiences that Veterans presenting with poorly managed high blood pressure, diabetes, high BMIs, smokers and frequent drug use are at a greater risk of CVD. The good news is many of these conditions are treatable and even preventable.

Please join me in supporting House Bill 104. By passing this important and critical legislation, we have an amazing opportunity to positively impact the health of our Veterans and our fellow

Ohioans by raising awareness, promoting healthy life changes, lowering healthcare costs and ultimately, preventing deaths.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan B. Tappan Williams, MSN,RN, AMB-BC  
(Retired)