

4/28/2025

Dear Chairmen Schmidt, Vice-Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani and Members of the House Health Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 12. This important legislation authorizes prescribers to prescribe off-label drugs with informed consent and mandates that pharmacists dispense such medications, provided there are no life-threatening contraindications or moral objections. HB 12 upholds the integrity of the physician-patient relationship by safeguarding the clinical judgment of healthcare professionals and promoting patient-centered care.

In particular, I want to highlight the key protections outlined in HB 12:

1. **Protecting Patients' Right to Treatment:** The bill ensures that consenting patients can fill prescriptions from their healthcare providers without obstruction from pharmacists. This applies to outpatient pharmacies, hospitals, and nursing homes, as long as no life-threatening contraindication exists or the pharmacist does not have a moral objection.
2. **Preventing Scientific Obstruction:** HB 12 prohibits pharmacists, hospitals, and nursing homes from refusing to fill a prescription due to a "scientific objection." However, it provides protections for pharmacists and facilities by granting them immunity from civil liability and administrative penalties if they document their concerns in the patient's chart after consulting with the prescriber. This balances the rights of both prescribers and pharmacists while prioritizing patient care.
3. **Preserving Prescribers' Licensure Rights:** The bill protects prescribers from the threat of license revocation or disciplinary action for prescribing off-label drugs to consenting patients—unless the prescriber acts with willful or gross negligence. This provision maintains accountability while ensuring that physicians can act in their patients' best interests without fear of undue punishment.
4. **Protecting Free Speech for Healthcare Providers:** HB 12 safeguards healthcare providers' right to free speech by preventing licensing boards from penalizing them for expressing opinions on the risks, benefits, or efficacy of drugs or treatments—even if those views differ from the board's stance. This protection is vital for fostering open, honest dialogue that promotes informed consent.

By championing HB 12, Ohio is taking a significant step toward preserving the autonomy and professional judgment of its healthcare providers, while protecting the rights of patients to access personalized, informed, and transparent care.

I commend the sponsors of HB 12 for their dedication to patient-centered healthcare and urge you to support this crucial legislation. Thank you for considering my remarks, and I look forward to continued collaboration in advancing healthcare policies that prioritize the well-being of Ohio's residents.

Sincerely,

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