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Opponent Testimony, Ohio House Bill 12 (HB 12)
Ohio House Health Committee
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Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice Chairman Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee -

My name is Kyle Finnerty, and I am the director of pharmacy services at Akron Children's. I am writing on behalf of our pharmacists, clinicians, staff and patient families to express my deep concern and strong opposition to House Bill 12 and the significant harm it poses to the children and families we care for across Ohio.

If enacted, HB 12 will put our most vulnerable population—pediatric patients—at increased risk of unsafe care, fragmented treatment and long-term harm. It introduces numerous quality and safety issues, mandates treatment without supporting medical evidence, and overrides the clinical judgment of trained professionals. Furthermore, it places undue burden and legal risk on pharmacists and disrupts the operational integrity of health care delivery systems.

At Akron Children's, we are committed to providing every child with equitable, reliable access to essential medications. We currently operate five pharmacies and are actively expanding access to underserved areas to bridge gaps in care and improve health outcomes for all children that we serve.

One of our pharmacies offers a wide range of over-the-counter and prescription medications, including items not available at neighborhood retail pharmacies such as medications for patients with cystic fibrosis, cancer and clotting disorders. As a pediatric hospital, we also provide custom compounded medication services to meet the unique needs of our patients and ensure, that regardless of condition, size or age, our patients have access to the therapies they need.

Additionally, Akron Children's operates a Specialty Pharmacy designed to handle high-cost medication with complex handling and storage requirements. These medications are typically not available through your local pharmacy but are critical to improving the quality of life of our patients. Our specialty pharmacy services are a strategic initiative for our health care system that allow us to enhance the continuity of care, support improved health outcomes and provide comprehensive pharmacy services for our patients. It is also aligned with Akron Children's quality and patient safety goals. Our pharmacists play a critical role in ensuring accurate dispensing and quality control, to reduce the risk of medication errors. Moreover, with increased care coordination, our team is focused on improving medication management and compliance, which can ultimately reduce hospitalizations and readmissions.

Akron Children's is proud to have earned accreditation from the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission (URAC) for our Specialty Pharmacy. URAC is a nationally recognized and independent



leader in promoting health care quality by setting high standards for clinical practice, consumer protections, performance measurement, operations infrastructure and risk management. This recognition reflects our ongoing commitment to providing safe, effective, and patient-centered care.

Our pharmacists, like all health care professionals, are guided by an oath to "do no harm" and to ensure optimal outcomes through safe, ethical care. House Bill 12 conflicts with that oath and threatens to dismantle key safeguards that protect patients and providers alike.

Specifically, HB 12 would:

- **Jeopardize patient safety by enabling the use of untested, potentially harmful treatments.** Pediatric patients require highly individualized, evidence-based care. Authorizing treatments without FDA approval or documented efficacy creates unnecessary and unacceptable risks.
- **Bypass informed consent and mislead families.** Parents may be encouraged to pursue therapies based on hope, not science—without fully understanding the lack of safety data, success rates, or possible adverse effects. This undermines their ability to make truly informed decisions for their children.
- **Undermine the expertise and authority of health care professionals.** HB 12 forces providers to deviate from established clinical guidelines and places legislative directives above medical training, sound judgment and hospital standards of care.
- **Increase the liability burden on pharmacists.** Pharmacists would be forced to process, verify, and document questionable prescriptions with unclear clinical value, increasing their legal exposure if adverse outcomes occur without proper documentation in the patient medical record.
- **Raise serious medication safety concerns, particularly through practices like “brown bagging.”** Allowing patients to transport and store medications outside of controlled environments dramatically increases the chances of contamination, mishandling, administration errors and risk of patient safety events.
- **Disregard institutional formularies, medication costs and reimbursement processes.** Hospitals develop formularies based on clinical effectiveness, safety and economic sustainability. HB 12 circumvents those processes, straining pharmacy operations and threatening the financial viability of patient care programs. Many insurances no longer reimburse hospitals for off-label indications due to the lack of medical evidence to support use. Passing of HB 12 will impose significant financial strain on health systems.
- **Disrupt hospital standards of care.** Established policies exist to ensure coordinated, safe, and evidence-based treatment. HB 12 disregards these standards, creating fragmented care and exposing patients to unnecessary harm.



At Akron Children's, our mission is to provide the safest and most effective care possible. House Bill 12 directly undermines that mission by overriding clinical best practices, eroding health care infrastructure, and exposing patients and professionals to unacceptable risks. Maintaining clinical balance and integrity regarding their drug treatment plans requires open lines of communication and respect for clinical perspectives among providers. The balance, communication and professional respect is vital to patients' well-being and compliance regarding numerous laws governing the treatment of hospitalized patients.

We urge this committee to reject HB 12 and instead collaborate with health care providers across Ohio to create legislation that prioritizes safety, supports clinical integrity, and protects our most vulnerable patients.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.