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House Health Committee
Sponsor Testimony – H.B. 324
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Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and esteemed members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony for House Bill 324, the Patient Protection Act. This legislation addresses a critical public health concern in Ohio by ensuring greater oversight and safety for patients prescribed or purchasing medications with a high risk of severe adverse effects, defined as causing death, organ failure, sepsis, or infections and hemorrhaging requiring hospitalization in more than 5% of users.

The rise of mail-order medication and telehealth has transformed how Ohioans access prescription and over-the-counter drugs. While telehealth can be beneficial, offering increased access to care and convenience, it may fall short when high-risk medications are involved. In cases with serious adverse effects, in-person evaluation and conversation enable prescribers to make more accurate diagnoses, tailor prescriptions to the patient’s specific needs, and ensure better-informed consent regarding the medication’s risks.

H.B. 324 addresses these concerns by prohibiting the sale of high-risk drugs via mail and requiring prescribers to conduct an in-person examination before issuing such prescriptions and to schedule a follow-up appointment. These measures ensure that patients receiving high-risk medications, even in an era of expanding telehealth, are protected through direct medical supervision, reducing the likelihood of preventable harm.

We, the sponsors, have consulted extensively with healthcare providers, patient advocacy groups, and industry stakeholders to ensure that H.B. 324 enhances patient safety while preserving common medical practices. For example, some cancer medications may meet the 5% threshold but are already managed with consistent oversight by oncologists. Our discussions confirm that the bill’s requirements align with these practices, ensuring no disruption in care for such patients.

Ohio’s state medical licensing system empowers us to enact stronger protections than those at the federal level. H.B. 324 leverages this authority to safeguard Ohioans by mandating rigorous

oversight for high-risk medications, whether prescription or over-the-counter. The bill tasks the Director of Health, in consultation with the Superintendent of Insurance and key state medical and pharmacy boards, to maintain a public list of drugs meeting the 5% threshold for severe adverse effects, ensuring transparency and accountability.

By requiring in-person evaluations and prohibiting mail-order sales of dangerous drugs, H.B. 324 protects Ohio's citizens from the risks associated with inadequate oversight in mail-order and telehealth systems. This bill is a proactive step to prioritize patient safety, uphold Ohio's high medical standards, and ensure our citizens are protected from the dangers of high-risk medications.

Thank you for your consideration of the Patient Protection Act. I respectfully urge your support for H.B. 324 and welcome any questions you may have.