

Written Testimony in Opposition of House Bill 324 to the Ohio House Health Committee by
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Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today. My name is Cara Jacob and I am a board certified physician practicing in Ohio. I have cared for patients in this state for over 13 years, and I am here to express my strong opposition to House Bill 324.

As a physician, my foremost duty is to protect the health, safety, and dignity of patients. Unfortunately, HB 324 would undermine this responsibility in several ways:

1. Interference with the Patient–Physician Relationship

Medical decisions must be made based on the best available scientific evidence and the individual circumstances of each patient. HB 324 places lawmakers between patients and their physicians, dictating care in ways that are not supported by clinical standards or medical best practice. This undermines the trust that is essential for safe and effective care.

2. Risks to Patient Health

If enacted, this bill would force physicians to practice medicine in ways that could cause harm. By restricting evidence-based treatments and adding unnecessary barriers to receiving medications, care for patients will be delayed. There are plenty of situations in which a telehealth visit is the only feasible way to see a patient due to lack of transportation, distance or a multitude of other life circumstances. By demanding in person visits prior to and after prescribing certain medications, you are punishing patients and prohibiting their care because of these circumstances. This in particular may have negative consequences for rural communities in Ohio where residents may not have access to certain medical specialists in their area and must travel far distances to get care. The provisions in this bill do not improve health outcomes; instead, they put up barriers to care which will increase the risk of complications and unnecessary suffering.

3. Erosion of Evidence-Based Practice

Modern medicine is grounded in peer-reviewed research, clinical guidelines, and professional expertise. HB 324 ignores these standards and instead promotes a politically driven agenda. I have watched proponent testimony of this bill in which a poorly designed, inherently biased, junk science “study” regarding mifepristone has been presented in an attempt to override decades of safety data as well as results of rigorous clinical trials which

have all shown a very low adverse event rate of less than 1% for this medication. By giving political appointees the authority to define adverse event rates of medications using retrospective insurance data, this bill implies that rigorous scientific evidence can be disregarded in favor of weaker, less reliable analyses. If we allow politics to override decades of data and evidence to dictate medical care, we jeopardize the integrity of the profession and compromise the safety of all Ohio patients.

In medicine, we are guided by the principle *primum non nocere* — first, do no harm. HB 324 violates that principle by substituting politics for science and ideology for compassion. I urge you to reject this legislation and instead work with physicians, nurses, and patient advocates to craft policies that truly improve the health and well-being of Ohioans.

Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cara Jacob, MD