



Proponent Testimony HB 253

Chair Schmidt, Vice-Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and esteemed members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 253 "License Advanced Practice Respiratory Therapists." As a practicing Pulmonary and Critical Care physician, medical director of the Master's in Respiratory Therapy Program, medical director of the Medical Intensive Care Units and Director of Critical Care of the James Cancer Hospital at The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center, I am writing to support the current proposed legislation regarding licensure for the Advanced Practice Respiratory Therapist (APRT). This new license would give current and future Respiratory Therapists a path to advance their skill set with completion of a masters training program equivalent to other Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) such as Certified Nurse Practitioners or Physician Assistants. As the population ages, there is an urgent need for an additional pool of qualified healthcare providers to care for the growing number of Ohioans living with cardiopulmonary diseases, such as COPD, asthma, acute pulmonary infections, respiratory failure and sleep-related disorders, as there is a significant gap anticipated in the available physician workforce caring for these specialized patients. The unique experience of the APRT with their prior respiratory therapy training will augment the existing pool of advanced practice providers to fill this gap in care and improve access to care for Ohioans diagnosed with complex cardiopulmonary diseases within hospital-based networks. Based on a national needs assessment survey in 2020, physicians in cardiopulmonary subspecialties (Pulmonary Medicine, Sleep Medicine, Critical Care and Anesthesiology) support the need for a specialized APP such as an APRT currently and in the future.

Given the identified need for an expanded pool of healthcare providers and fit of the APRT to fill this, a curriculum and accreditation system has been developed to allow for the training that would meet the requirement to become an APRT. The Commission for the Accreditation of Respiratory Care (CoARC) has set accreditation standards for advanced degree programs developed to train APRTs. The Ohio State University developed a Master's in Respiratory Therapy program to meet the expectations of an APRT program and was successfully accredited by CoARC in 2019. The program has successfully graduated five classes since 2021. The curriculum contains content to expand their skill set and is equivalent to other APP programs such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants. This equivalent education and training includes extensive coursework and clinical experience in prescribing and ordering medical care, medical devices and medications to provide evidence-based care. This includes providing evidence based care using national clinical practice guidelines in all patient care settings. Examples include ordering and interpreting pulmonary function testing to manage chronic pulmonary disease as well as ordering and interpreting sleep studies to determine the appropriate medical device to prescribe for sleep disorders.

It is important to note that this bill does not create independent practitioners, and it does not allow APRTs to prescribe controlled substances based on recommendations from the Medical Board of

Ohio. The APRT will only practice under the on-site supervision of a physician specializing in cardiopulmonary disease processes. This bill does, however, create an additional workforce of qualified healthcare providers to ease the gap in available physicians and allow for improved access to care for patients suffering from complex cardiopulmonary diseases in Ohio.

In summary, I strongly support this important legislation to allow for the creation of Advanced Practice Respiratory Therapist licensure. Thank you, Chair Schmidt and members of the committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Emily Amin', with a stylized, flowing script.

Emily Amin, MD

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