June 5, 2025

Chairman Cirino, Vice-Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am David Burke, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Pharmacists Association. A key House provision placed into the state budget was a payment methodology which required pharmacies to be paid at drug cost and receive a dispensing fee based on Ohio's surveyed cost to dispense. This provision was removed in the Sub Bill, and I ask you to reinsert it in the Omnibus version to stabilize the pharmacy market in Ohio.

This ties closely to much needed PBM regulatory reform. House Bill 229 and Senate Bill 210 give employers and payers the PBM transparency they receive in other health care insurance products. Without this oversight, it is unclear how Ohio will ever return to a competitive pharmacy benefit marketplace where consumers make informed purchase choices.

The Federal 340B program provides much needed medications to fellow Ohioans by allowing access to contracted community pharmacies. Thank you for adding the compromise that allows Federal Qualified Health Centers continue using contract pharmacies into the Sub Bill.

Finally, we appreciate your silence regarding the removal of the single PBM from Medicaid. The state has demonstrated a pathway forward away from the PBM monopolies that has yielded $140 million in savings in just two years. Thank you for not taking this item up.

Without payment stabilization and meaningful PBM regulation, the Ohio retail pharmacy market will continue to deteriorate. Recent Board of Pharmacy data shows independent pharmacy closure this year nearly equal to all last year, and it is only June. I fear our friends in the chain sector may follow the pathway of Walgreens and make irreversible choices that limit Ohioans' access to medication if our state does not act now.

Respectfully,

David E. Burke, R.Ph. MBA
Executive Director
Ohio Pharmacists Association