Occupational Licenses and Certifications Testimony
Ohio Department of Health
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
March 4, 2026

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the occupational licenses and certifications the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) oversees. My name is Lisa Griffin Chapa and I'm the Director of Government Affairs at the Ohio Department of Health.

ODH's mission is to invest in the health and well-being of all Ohioans. ODH works to fulfill that commitment through a public health system of unique partnerships and funding streams focused on continually improving health outcomes for all Ohioans.

Eighteen of the 23 certifications and licensures the committee is reviewing are part of ODH's Environmental Health and Radiation Protection program. Renee Dickman, Chief of the Bureau of Environmental Health and Radiation Protection, will speak to these certifications and licensures.

The core public health responsibilities of the Bureau of Environmental Health and Radiation Protection (BEHRP) is to assess and monitor environmental factors that potentially impact public health, including air, water, soil, food, and physical and social features of our surroundings. Through BEHRP, ODH offers certificates or occupational licenses in 5 areas: food safety, environmental health specialist registration, lead, radon, and radiation medicine.

Food Safety Certifications (ORC 3717.09, 3717.51)
The program establishes standards for education and training provided to food managers to promote food safety practices for preventing foodborne illness. As specified in ORC 3717.09, the Director of Health approves person-in-charge (PIC) and manager courses of study for certification in food protection, and issues manager certificates to individuals who successfully complete a manager certification course of study and pass the examination. The program does not issue licenses. All program duties are completed by four ODH Food Program staff.

In ODH's Food Safety Program, individuals have the option to be certified at a basic (or "Person in Charge Level 1") and manager levels (Level 2) in safe food handling and food service in order to promote food safety practices and protect the public from foodborne illnesses. <u>It is important to note that individuals can work in food service operations (FSOs) without obtaining these certifications. These certifications may help an individual advance in the food service industry and are not a barrier to entry into a career in food service.</u>

The ODH Food Safety Program provides a list on its website of approved certification providers in each county (in-person) and available online courses. An individual works directly with a provider of their choice to register and receive the certification training.

- Person in Charge (PIC) food handler certification for food service operations: Level 1 Person-In-Charge (PIC) Certification in Food Protection is a mandated training for the designated person in charge for each shift of a risk level I, II, III, and IV food service operation or retail food establishment under specified conditions. An individual would pay the provider of their choice

and the course provider issues the PIC certification. The cost range for PIC certification is from $0-$22. Some local health departments offer it for free to their license holders. The course provider determines the cost of the PIC certification. The certification course is available in-person or online.

- Manager Certification in Food Protection for food service operations: Level 2

The Manager Certification in Food Protection program is a more extensive training course that provides managers with in-depth knowledge of proper food safety practices for use in their facilities. The Ohio Department of Health has administered the Manager Certification in Food Protection program since 1973. The Manager Certificate is issued directly from ODH after receiving the exam results from the course provider. ODH issues approximately 15,000 manager certificates per year. The manager certification does not expire, so renewals are not required. ODH does not charge for manager certification issuance, but course providers charge within a range of $78 - $180 for the course and exam.

Since March 1, 2017, each risk level III and risk level IV food service operation and retail food establishment is required to have at least one employee with supervisory and management responsibility and the authority to direct and control food preparation and service that has obtained the Ohio Manager Certification in food protection.

Both certifications help ensure the public is receiving safe food at retail and food service operations, they also provide training that will help these employees and businesses be successful and efficient in their operations. Coursework is approved by the ODH Director, and the public is welcome to comment on the program and rules. ODH also offers expedited certification application processing for service members, veterans, and their spouses.

Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS - ORC 3776)

Registered Environmental Health Specialists have specialized knowledge and skills in the field of environmental public health science, including but not limited to, food safety, private water systems, and rabies control. Registered Environmental Health Specialists are essential to protecting the health and safety of Ohioans.

- Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) registration
- Environmental Health Specialist-in-training (EHSIT) registration

The Director of ODH is charged with registration of Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) and Environmental Health Specialist-in-Training (EHSIT). The Director of Health appoints the seven members of the Environmental Health Specialist Advisory Board (ORC 3776.02) who advises the Director on the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program. The program staffed by one full time exempt reviews and issues registrations to allow REHS and EHSITs to enter the workforce in Ohio. Program also reviews and approves continuing education courses and assists registrants renewing their registrations.

To become registered as a REHS, the individual must apply, pay a fee ($100 and $75 for renewal), pass an exam, and meet the education and experience requirements outlined in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC 3776.05). Individuals must have a bachelor's degree and relevant coursework in science and environmental fields, along with work experience as an environmental health specialist. Those who meet the educational qualifications of an environmental health specialist but have not yet met the work experience requirements, may apply for registration as an environmental health specialist-

in-training and pay a fee ($50 and $35 for renewal). An EHSIT must apply for registration as an environmental health specialist and take an exam within four years after environmental health specialist-in-training registration. The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) exam and registration process allows for standards to be uniform across the state and ensures that the public receives consistent service delivery by public health professionals.

Every licensee is required to complete 24 hours of approved continuing education per biennial renewal cycle. The Program approves providers who apply to give continuing education courses for registrants to receive credit. CE can be obtained at conferences, online, and through their places of employment. The majority of individuals obtain a mix of their CE from conferences/seminars and online providers.

There are over 1,600 active registered environmental health specialists and environmental health specialists-in-training in the state. ODH issues around 235 new licenses and 800 renewals annually. Licenses are biennial and FY25 revenue was $81,640.

Radon Education and Licensing Program (ORC 3723)
This program is critical to protecting the public from radon gas, which is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Radon is a colorless and odorless radioactive gas that comes from the soil. The gas can accumulate inside homes. Exposure to radon can lead to lung cancer. A radon test is the only way to know how much radon is in your home. Radon can be reduced with a mitigation system. ODH offers free radon test kits for Ohio homeowners. The free radon test kits are available at ohio.radon.com. This webpage also links to a Find a Licensed Radon Contractor tool for Ohioans to utilize.

- Radon tester
- Radon mitigation contractor
- Radon mitigation specialist
- Radon Training Course
- Radon Laboratory

The ODH Radon Education and Licensing Program is funded through federal grant dollars and licensure fees and works in cooperation with the US EPA and utilizes 2.65 full time exempt staff. This program licenses companies and people directly involved with the radon testing and mitigation industry. ODH regulates contractors that install radon mitigation systems, mitigation specialists who design and supervise the installation of mitigation systems, radon testers, radon laboratories, and the companies that provide required radon training.

Licensed radon professionals identify and educate about the potential health risks of radon exposure. If elevated radon levels are discovered, a radon mitigation specialist works to evaluate the results and design a mitigation system that reduces radon levels. Both testers and mitigation specialists are trained to provide post-mitigation testing. Post mitigation testing is how the effectiveness of radon mitigation is evaluated. Radon contractors may be sole proprietors or may employ other licensed radon professionals.

Any individual, business entity or public entity that engages or intends to engage in residential or commercial radon activities must apply for licensure. These include persons performing radon testing and mitigation, contractors or companies that provide mitigation services, laboratories

that analyze active and passive radon devices and radon training course providers. This does not include individuals or entities performing work on a property that they own or lease.

Radon licenses require training and testing, sixteen hours of continuing education within the two-year licensing period. To be licensed for radon in Ohio, individuals must complete an ODH approved radon training course for radon measurement and pass an ODH approved radon measurement exam to become a licensed radon tester. To become a licensed radon mitigation specialist, an individual must complete an ODH approved radon measurement training course and an ODH approved radon mitigation training course. Individuals must also pass both the ODH approved radon measurement exam and the ODH approved radon mitigation exam.
The revenue for the program is approximately $193,000. See chart below for Initial and Renewal Fees:

Radon Tester	$400
Radon Mitigation Contractor	$800
Radon Mitigation Specialist	$600
Radon Training Course	$600
Radon Laboratory	$600

Annually, radon licensees perform around 50,000 radon tests per year, with an average of 10,000 radon mitigation systems installed throughout the state. The program processes over 400 license applications each year, along with providing accreditation to training courses and radon laboratories. The program performs compliance inspections on these projects and training courses throughout the state of Ohio. The program performs records reviews of the documentation required related to radon mitigation and testing activities. The program provides education and compliance assistance to its licensees on a regular ongoing basis.

Lead Licensure and Accreditation Program
Lead has many hazardous health effects and has been banned or significantly reduced in many products. Children can be exposed to lead in many ways, but most exposure happens when children put their hands and things into their mouths while playing. Even small amounts of lead can cause learning and behavior problems in children. Lead replaces iron and calcium and affects many parts of the body, especially the nervous system. Lead is most harmful to children under the age of six, because a child's growing body takes up lead easily. Lead can also be dangerous to a baby during pregnancy. Problems related to lead poisoning can last the child's whole life. Even at low levels, lead can lower IQ, cause attention disorders, make it difficult for a child to pay attention in school, delay growth, impair hearing, and more.

Lead was used in house paint until 1978, and any house built before that year could have lead paint. Lead chips and dust from lead-based paint can be ingested or ground into dust, which can be ingested or inhaled. Exposure to lead during childhood can lead to lifelong negative consequences, especially in brain development.

- Lead Inspector
- Lead abatement contractor
- Lead risk assessor
- Lead abatement project designer
- Lead abatement worker

- Clearance technician license

The ODH Lead Poisoning Prevention Program ensures that the public receives safe and proper lead abatement, detection, and analytical services. The program dispenses information and educational pamphlets about lead poisoning and its prevention upon request as well as conducting training sessions for lead professionals, real estate agents, and medical personnel. ODH utilizes 5.7 FTEs for this program.

There are 6 different occupational licensures under this program: inspector, risk assessor, abatement contractor, abatement project designer, abatement worker, and clearance technician. These licensure categories help homeowners and property owners reduce and control lead hazards.

The requirements for each 2-year license vary depending on role. For risk assessors, abatement contractors and designers: licensure recognizes experience earned in the field or through academic or professional training. For lead abatement workers, inspectors and clearance technicians, there is no prior experience requirement. These roles serve as excellent entry points into the industry. The required training courses are widely available and offered through private sources. Those interested in becoming lead abatement workers and lead clearance technicians can complete training locally in one week, become licensed, and use their on-the-job experience to qualify for other lead professional roles. Examination is required for initial licensure and provided by a third-party vendor. Continuing education is required to be completed during the two-year licensing period. The third-party testing vendor is awarded through a competitive bid process.

There are over 2,100 licensed lead professionals in Ohio today. Annually, these individuals perform over 5,000 regulated lead abatement activities around the state. The program engages the public and industry through regular meetings, annual training courses, and trade organization conferences. Revenue from the license and renewal fees is approximately $400,000.

Lead Clearance Technician	$250
Lead Inspector	$250
Lead Abatement Contractor	$500
Lead Risk Assessor	$250
Lead Abatement Project Designer	$500
Lead Abatement Worker	$50

Radiologic and Radioactive Handling

ODH certifies and licenses individuals who work with radioactive materials or machines in healthcare settings. Uncontrolled radiation poses great health risks. Radiation applied in intentional and targeted means is useful for both diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, and regulation of professionals working in this area is necessary to protect the health and safety of both patients and staff. ODH has dedicated 3 staff members for this licensing and certification program.

- Radiation Expert certification - therapeutic radiation- generating equipment
- Radiation Expert certification - diagnostic radiation- generating equipment
- Radiation Expert certification - mammography radiation- generating equipment

Radiation Expert Certification is available to qualified individuals who test radiation-generating equipment and oversee radiation protection at hospitals, and audit quality assurance programs at

their facilities in the interest of patient and public safety. Approximately 132 certifications are issued annually in the areas of diagnostic, therapeutic, and mammography radiation-generating equipment. This certification recognizes advanced formal education, as well as on-the-job experience. Continuing Education is required: 15 hours for one category, 20 hours for two categories, and 25 hours for three categories. There is an application fee of $100 per certification, and the certification must be renewed every two years (renewal is $100). The program's annual budget of $18,200 comes from application and renewal fees.

- Radioactive material handler license
- Radiologic license (General X-ray machine operator (GXMO), radiographer, radiation therapist, nuclear medicine technologist license)

The Radioactive Materials Program issues licenses for the handling of radioactive materials at various medical, research, academic, and industrial facilities in Ohio. Radioactive materials licenses are issued to a business entity and not to specific individuals as handlers of radioactive materials. This program operates under an agreement with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The rules for this program are required to be identical to those promulgated by the NRC.

Radiologic Licensing is required of individuals operating radiation-generating equipment in healthcare facilities. ODH issues approximately 8,000 licenses each year. These individuals fall into 4 categories: nuclear medicine technologists, Radiation Therapists, radiographers, and general x-ray machine operators. The licensure recognizes the education and training that individuals have obtained in this field and includes an exam or equivalent recognition by qualifying professional boards. There is an initial application fee of $65 and licenses must be renewed every two years for $45.

Any person applying to renew a General X-Ray Machine Operator (GXMO) license shall have completed 12 continuing education (CE) credits in radiation safety approved by ODH. Any person applying to renew a radiographer, nuclear medicine or radiation therapy license shall have completed 24 CE credits in radiation safety approved by ODH. Applicants with multiple licenses may use the same 24 hours of CE for the renewal of each license. ODH accepts CE courses already approved by American Society of Radiologic Technologists or the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging for the subjects and number of continuing education credits related to radiation safety.

State licensing is a preventative measure to minimize unnecessary or excessive ionizing radiation exposure to patients. By minimizing or keeping medical radiation exposure as low as reasonably achievable reduces the likelihood of radiation induced long term health effects or injury. Errors in radiation therapy can result in injury or death. The program's annual budget of $400,000 comes from application and renewal fees.

ODH Bureau of Regulatory Operations and Bureau of Survey and Certification
James Hodge, Chief of Healthcare Compliance

The next set of licensures and certifications the committee is reviewing falls under two related programs at ODH- the Bureau of Regulatory Operations (BRO) and the Bureau of Survey and Certification (BOSC). BRO is responsible for licensing, certification, and enforcement for health care facilities, services, and programs. BOSC is responsible for conducting survey inspections to ensure health care providers and clinical laboratories are compliant with state and federal requirements.

ODH does not have dedicated staff for particular providers. All providers are handled by a team of licensing specialists, surveyors, and support staff.

- Nonagency home health provider
- Skilled Home Health Services license or Nonmedical Home Health Services license

Home Health Agency licensing was enacted during the 134th General Assembly to help the citizens of Ohio in obtaining safe and regulated care that is provided in their residence by licensing individuals that provide non-medical and skilled home health services.

There are currently 17 active nonagency home health providers licensed and 9 pending nonagency home health providers licensed. Over the past two years we have averaged 5 new applications in this category. New license applications cost $250 and the renewal is a triennial license of $250 which generates $2,350 annually.

Under the Skilled Home Health Services or Nonmedical Home Health Services there are currently 3,691 active licensed and 508 pending licenses. Over the past two years we have averaged 880 new applications. New license applications cost $250 and the renewal is a triennial license of $250 which generates approximately $275,000 annually.

- Residential Care Facility (RCF) license
- Nursing Home license

ODH is responsible for the oversight and enforcement of the licensing laws required for residential care facilities and nursing homes to operate in the state. These regulations establish standards for staffing, resident care, safety, communication, resident rights, activities, facility upgrades, and emergency preparedness. Residential care facilities, also known as assisted living facilities, provide a range of services, including accommodation, supervision and personal care services. Nursing Homes, also known as Skilled Nursing facilities, also provide services and accommodations, however, they provide a higher level of skilled nursing and medical care to individuals with illness, injury, or impairments than a Residential Care Facility.

Ohio has 812 active Residential Care Facility licenses which are renewed annually and averages 20 new licenses a year. RCF licenses are $320 for annual and renewal for each 50 beds within a RCF. The revenue for RCF licenses is approximately $515,840. There are 915 active Nursing Home licenses which are also renewed annually and average 10 new licenses each year. NH licenses are $320 for each 50 beds within a nursing home. The revenue for NH licenses is approximately $585,600.

Epinephrine Autoinjector Certificate (ORC 3728) - Lastly, ODH also offers free training and a certificate to allow individuals working at "Qualified Entities" to maintain and administer epinephrine to individuals experiencing life-threatening anaphylactic allergic reactions (via an Epi-Pen or other similar device). Qualified Entities include employers, restaurants, colleges and universities, day care centers, and other similar locations. A certificate is available at no cost to individuals and is received after completing a free online training module. This certificate allows an establishment to have epinephrine on hand without a specific prescription for emergency situations, in the same way that AEDs and fire extinguishers are there to protect the public's health and safety.

Thank you again for allowing us the opportunity to testify and we'll be happy to answer any questions.