



Representative Robert Cole Sprague
83rd House District

Representative Nickie Antonio
13th House District

House Bill 248
Sponsor Testimony
House Health and Aging Committee
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Chair Gonzales, Vice Chair Huffman, and members of the House Health and Aging Committee, thank you for giving us the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 248. House Bill 248, the Abuse-Deterrent Technology bill, is part of a comprehensive package of bills that will cut at the root of Ohio's addiction epidemic.

In Ohio, since 2007, unintentional drug overdose has been the leading cause of accidental death. Sadly, the overdose death toll continues its unrelenting climb. Recently, the 2013 overdose statistics were released by the Ohio Department of Health. There were a total of 2,110 overdoses recorded, which is about a 10% increase from 2012. Over 72% of the 2013 overdose deaths were related to opioids, and almost half of these deaths were caused by prescription narcotics.

There is a reason as to why the addiction problem is this severe. Our medical system utilizes five vital signs to measure a patient's level of health. These signs include temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure, and pain level. Following a federal push in the 1990s to add pain as the fifth vital sign, numerous states passed legislation to ensure chronic pain was being treated effectively. Shortly after these reforms, addiction to opioids became rampant. Ohio dispensed about 80 million doses of prescription narcotics in 2003. By 2013, the number of doses dispensed had increased to about 828 million. There is a direct, nearly one to one, correlation between the number of prescription narcotics coming out of the medical system and unintentional overdose deaths.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use in Households, which was conducted from 2008 to 2009, 76% of nonmedical users of prescription narcotics use drugs that were prescribed to someone else. When individuals snort or inject these narcotics, after crushing or dissolving them, they receive a quicker and more aggressive high. To prevent these practices, abuse-deterrent formulations were introduced. Although there is always a chance of abuse by swallowing whole prescription narcotic pills, research has shown that abuse-deterrent

formulations have decreased illegal diversion and use. Without worrying about their patient's specific insurance policy, House Bill 248 will give prescribers the opportunity to utilize tamper-resistant forms of these highly abused substances. Health insurance plans will be required to provide coverage for abuse-deterrent formulations, and prescribers will have the opportunity to decide if abuse-deterrent formulations are acceptable for certain patients. The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation has begun moving in the direction proposed by House Bill 248, and we commend them for taking abuse-deterrent formulations into consideration. Promoting the utilization of abuse-deterrent formulations will be another way for the State of Ohio to combat our current addiction epidemic, and this bill will focus on attacking the problem at its source.

Our current drug epidemic not only takes its toll on individuals with an addiction and their families, but it negatively impacts the entire State of Ohio. Our businesses are hungry for workers, but many that apply can't pass a drug test. As a result, food stamp usage and Medicaid rolls are swelling. The courts and jails are overflowing, and our prisons are packed beyond capacity. Our law enforcement officers are struggling to keep up with ongoing occurrences of drug-related crimes and other crimes that result from addiction. Children are being born addicted, entering the foster care system at alarming rates, or being raised by their relatives. Furthermore, it is estimated that the opioid addiction epidemic is costing Ohio over \$3.5 billion in medical, work loss, and quality-of-life loss costs.

It is high time for us to take the necessary steps to stem the tide of the epidemic, and House Bill 248 builds on the prior work that has been completed by the Governor, Attorney General, and General Assembly.

Thank you for your time and attention. We would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.