



Written Testimony Regarding House Bill 285

**To:
Ohio House Health and Aging Committee
January 20, 2016**

Respectfully submitted by:

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Walgreen Co.



January 20, 2016

Re: 90 Day Conversion – House Bill 285

Dear Members of the House Health and Aging Committee:

Chairwoman Gonzales, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and honorable members of the Committee:

On behalf of Walgreen Co. (Walgreens), I thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 285 to the Committee as it examines the issue of permitting pharmacists to dispense a 90 day supply of certain medications.

Walgreens, the nation's largest drugstore chain, operates over 8,200 drugstores in 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In the state of Ohio, Walgreens operates 270 stores, 28 healthcare clinics and employs more than 6,900 employees.

As the Committee is all too familiar, prescription drug costs are on the rise as the population ages and more people are diagnosed with chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure requiring maintenance medications. Drug costs can be reduced with 90-day retail prescriptions over multiple 30-day prescriptions. In addition, 90-day prescription options available in retail community pharmacies increase patient access to important, life-saving medications, as well as save patients time and money while increasing adherence to medication therapies.

A single 90-day retail prescription option produces clear savings compared to three separate 30-day prescription fills. Meaningful savings are created through lower reimbursements due to reduced dispensing fees and related ingredient costs. Patients also save money by switching to 90-day prescriptions and decreasing their out-of-pocket costs.

Additional savings are generated through increased generic utilization rates. Data shows that generic utilization rates for 90-day retail prescriptions were 10.6% higher than 30-day retail prescriptions. Improvement was even greater between retail and mail-order prescriptions – 20.2% for 90-day retail over 90-day mail-order service. Such advances in generic utilization rates can be attributed to the face-to-face interaction of patients and community pharmacists, where a patient can be counseled on their medication options.

Patient non-adherence to their prescription drug regimen is a significant cost driver in healthcare – approximately \$290 billion annually – and is associated with higher hospitalization and mortality rates. Recent studies have demonstrated that 90-day retail prescriptions increase medication adherence by as much as 15% over 30-day prescriptions minimizing multiple community pharmacy visits.

Currently, Ohio law, regulations and policies prevent 90-day retail prescriptions and limit patient access to critical medications. In some cases, retail pharmacists are precluded from providing the patient with a 90-day prescription by both public and private drug plans, limiting payments to no more than a 30-day supply at a given time. This outdated approach increases patient burden and cost by requiring them to pay additional co-pays.

At Walgreens, we believe in providing the best care to our patients and improving overall public health. Walgreens recommends that lawmakers remove barriers that prevent retail pharmacies from dispensing or converting to 90-day prescriptions. This bill removes the need to burden prescribers with a call to verify a combined fill for a prescription they have already written for authorized refills. Such barriers do not meet the demands of the current healthcare system nor do they meet the needs of patients. We urge this Committee and the Ohio General Assembly to support HB 285 as written.



Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

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