
House Health Committee Senate Bill 229 –proponent testimony

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio and all members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide supportive comments on behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians, Ohio Chapter (Ohio ACEP) regarding Senate Bill 229. Ohio ACEP is a state medical specialty society representing emergency medicine with more than 1,500 emergency physician members. Ohio ACEP is committed to advancing emergency care through continuing education, research and public education, and assuring access to high quality emergency care for the people of Ohio.

Ohio ACEP applauds efforts to strengthen the Ohio Board of Pharmacy’s ability to respond to the opiate epidemic that is devastating to all parts of Ohio. I can assure you that Ohio’s emergency physicians are also dedicated to combatting this epidemic, as they are on the front lines and see the impact that addiction has on patients daily.

Today, our organization would like to specifically comment on one important provision of the bill. As introduced SB 229 would add employees of the Board of Pharmacy to the list of professionals whose personal and family information is excluded from public records. This is certainly a common sense provision. These employees should not be fearful of their personal information, or that of their families, getting into the hands of someone who might wish them harm. Ohio ACEP was able to work with the sponsor to also include this protection for EMS Medical Directors.

This exemption in law currently applies to firefighters, EMTs, bailiffs, parole officers, etc... These are all individuals who come into contact with the public. However, they are also in positions where those interactions with the public might not always be welcomed or positive. The same can also be said for Medical Directors or a member of a cooperating physician advisory board of an emergency medical service organization. According to Ohio Emergency Medical Services website: “The medical director of an Ohio EMS agency is a valuable and mandatory asset of an EMS agency. In addition, this physician serves a critical liaison between the local EMS agency, hospital administrators and medical staff, local public health and public safety agencies, and the layperson members of the community”. These Medical Directors are making critical decisions about how EMS care is delivered to the public.

Ohio ACEP is pleased that an amendment to SB 229 was accepted to also protect the personal information of Ohio’s Medical Directors of EMS agencies. It makes sense that their information be given the same protection as those they are providing the direction to, i.e. EMTs.

We appreciate the work of the bill sponsor, Senator John Eklund on this issue. We also thank this committee for their consideration of this important bill.

President
John R. Queen, MD, FACEP

President-Elect
Bradley Raetzke, MD, FACEP

Treasurer
Ryan Squier MD, FACEP

Secretary
Nicole A. Veitinger, DO, FACEP

Immediate Past President
Purva Grover, MD, FACEP

Executive Director
Laura L. Tiberi, MA, CAE