



Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee

Written Interested Party Testimony – HB 341

June 9, 2020

*Franklin County Board of Commissioners*

John O'Grady

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Chairman Burke, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity for the Franklin County Board of Commissioners to submit interested party testimony regarding House Bill 341.

According to the Franklin County Coroner's office, there was a 14 percent increase in overdose deaths in 2019 compared with 2018, and almost 91 percent of these fatal overdoses involved an opioid. The Coroner has also released data for 2020 indicating a 49 percent increase in overdose deaths between January 1st and February 21<sup>st</sup> compared with the same period in 2019, and we have seen a relentless recurrence of overdose surge notifications since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

We know all too well these statistics and what they represent in terms of devastation to the individuals, families, and communities behind the statistics, and we remain firmly committed to the federal, state, and local partnerships that have formed to fight the scourge of drug overdoses.

Among the tools and strategies currently being deployed at the local, state, and federal level, naloxone has proven to be quite literally lifesaving on the front lines of this work. In Franklin County from January 2017 through December 2019, 1,695 naloxone kits were distributed through partnerships with Columbus and Franklin County Public Health, and the Franklin County Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board for Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided with Naloxone), and in the Columbus and Franklin County 2020 Addiction Plan, these partners and others set a goal to increase the number of naloxone doses distributed by 30 percent.

Increasing service entity access to naloxone is a strong step in the right direction to provide resources where needed most, stabilize the addiction crisis and move Ohio out of the top five states with the highest risk of opioid overdose. House Bill 341 advances these goals by reducing both real and perceived barriers to dispensing naloxone to individuals who are at high risk of experiencing an overdose, and we thank the bill sponsors and committee members for your work on this important legislation.