



SCR 14 Proponent Testimony to the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee

Chairman Burke, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio:

I am writing today on behalf the osteopathic physicians and students of the Ohio Osteopathic Association to express support for SCR 14, which declares racism a public health crisis and asks the Governor to establish a working group to promote racial equality in Ohio.

The Ohio Osteopathic Association (OOA) represents approximately 5,000 actively practicing osteopathic physicians (DOs) in the state of Ohio and more than 1,000 osteopathic medical students. DOs represent about 1 in 6 of the total physicians practicing in Ohio and more than a quarter of the state's family physicians. Osteopathic physicians approach wellness through a comprehensive approach that recognizes the person is a unit of body, mind, and spirit.

In light of the horrific killing of George Floyd and the continued endangerment of people of color, the OOA expresses its support for racial justice. **In the strongest possible terms, the OOA advocates for equality in all its forms. This clearly must be true for health care access, quality of care, public safety, and other factors that contribute to public health.**

The OOA is an advocate for combating racism and guaranteeing personal safety and quality health care. In 2017, the OOA passed policy to encourage osteopathic medical institutions to “engage in expert facilitated, evidence-based dialogue in cultural competency and the physician’s role in eliminating racial health care disparities in medical treatment as part of a longitudinal curriculum throughout undergraduate medical education.” The impetus of this policy was recognition that health care outcomes of minorities were lower even when patients’ socioeconomic differences were controlled. This same policy was approved by our national partner, the American Osteopathic Association, later that year. The OOA remains more committed than ever to these enduring values to address racial disparities in medical treatment.

Comprehensive wellness—in body, mind, and spirit—can only be fully achieved if personal safety is guaranteed for all people. Entirely too often this safety is not ensured. Discriminatory surveillance and policing are often exacerbated by excessive force. This must stop. Every single person deserves respect, equality, and justice. As a country, we are falling short.

The OOA strongly encourages your support of SCR 14. If (and hopefully when) this resolution passes, the OOA would actively contribute to the working group to promote racial equality.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have at mattharney@ohiodo.org. Thank you to the Senate Health Committee for its consideration.

Matt Harney
Executive Director
Ohio Osteopathic Association