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Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the Health Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in support of HB 9, which prohibits children under the age of 18 from purchasing products that contain dextromethorphan. Dextromethorphan, or DXM, is a common ingredient in over-the-counter cough and cold products. Dextromethorphan is a non-addictive cough suppressant and, if used appropriately, is quite safe. However, in recent years it has become a popular drug of abuse, increasingly abused by adolescents and young adults to get high. There are several alternative names it goes by including "triple c's", "robo", "skittles", "velvet syrup", and "vitamin D". DXM can also be used in combination with other drugs such as 3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine, also known as MDMA, ecstasy, or "molly".

Unfortunately, dextromethorphan is widely available, easy to obtain, and is becoming very popular amongst adolescents and young adults. At the Central Ohio Poison Center we manage an average of 200 dextromethorphan abuse and misuse cases each year. The typical scenario is a teenage patient with a history of abusing an over-the-counter DXM product that arrives to an emergency room with confusion, hallucinations, agitation, rapid heart rate, and high blood pressure. Sometimes we also see vomiting and, in rare cases, seizures.

In Ohio, since the year 2000, the Poison Center has managed more than 4,000 patients for dextromethorphan abuse and misuse. Children between the ages of 13 and 18 accounted for half (2,140) of the total volume. Of the total cases, more than 1,900 were evaluated in an emergency rooms, over 1,000 admitted for hospitalizations, and more than 1,200 were considered serious, with 2 fatalities occurring. Serious cases include patients with hallucinations, agitation, tachycardia (rapid heart rate), hypertension (high blood pressure), and seizures.

Banning the sale of dextromethorphan to minors is good policy and would positively impact children's health in Ohio. I urge passage of HB 9. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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