

March 2, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice-Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 37.

UC Health is an integrated academic health system serving the Greater Cincinnati region. In partnership with the University of Cincinnati, UC Health combines clinical expertise and compassion with research and teaching. As the region's academic health care system, patients travel to UC Health for subspecialized, world-class care only we can provide. We are innovators, relentless in our pursuit of the best in medicine and able to care for the most complex and critically ill patients. We hold the highest standard of patient care, clinical research and medical education. House Bill 37 makes several revisions to Ohio law that would increase the availability of life saving drugs to patients who do not have a prescription. Currently, pharmacists are permitted to dispense drugs to a patient without a prescription one time per year if the drug is not a controlled substance and the patient's record demonstrates the patient is enrolled in consistent drug therapy. House Bill 37 extends this permission to three times a year, further ensuring that patients who need access to lifesaving medication are able to access this critical care at the pharmacy.

This important piece of legislation also requires health insurance plans to cover one refill of the drug without a prescription, if drug coverage is included in the patient's health benefit plan. Further, health insurance plans are prohibited from establishing any additional cost sharing requirements on a patient that accesses medication without a prescription.

The reforms included in House Bill 37 greatly improve the access patients need to critical lifesaving medication. As Representative Manning stated in the sponsor testimony provided to this committee, many patients under current law cannot access vital medication without a prescription because they cannot afford the cost. By requiring health plans to honor one refill of a critical drug without a prescription, and by increasing the limit of visits a patient can make to a pharmacy without a prescription, this committee is greatly increasing the accessibility of these important medications for Ohio patients. We strongly support this bill and thank Representative Gayle Manning for her leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shelly Dusing Wiest'.

Shelly Dusing Wiest, PharmD, BCPS, FASHP
Vice President
Pharmacy Services