

To: Members of the Ohio House Health Committee

Fr: Joe Rosato, Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association

Da: March 9, 2021

Re: HB 37

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On behalf of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), the state's oldest and largest professional organization representing Ohio physicians, medical residents, and medical students, we are writing today in support of House Bill 37, which would increase the number of times that a pharmacist may dispense certain drugs without a prescription to a specific patient in case of emergencies and requires health insurers to cover at least one refill under those circumstances.

OSMA supports the overall premise of HB 37 as a way to help patients adhere to the treatment prescribed by their physicians, and safely increase convenience and accessibility of continuing prescription medication treatment. If patients are unable to obtain a refill of a life-saving medication or a medication which is necessary to maintain their health and function, and they are out of the medication, it is critical that we provide a safe pathway for them to continue their treatment without interruption. As you probably know, for many prescription medications, it is not advised that a patient suddenly stop, ration, split, or miss doses, because doing so may be detrimental or dangerous. This bill represents an effort to make it easier for patients to keep up with their prescribed treatment and avoid risky disruptions.

We have approached the sponsor with several suggestions regarding the bill, including a provision that would require health insurer coverage of at least one refill per year by a pharmacist under these circumstances. OSMA suggests that in order for the changes made by HB 37 to have their complete intended effect, the insurer should provide coverage for up to 3 refills. Additionally, while we agree that patients should be able to get their medications in the event of an emergency, our members have concerns about a provision of the bill that as written, may allow a patient to refill their prescription without obtaining refill authorization from the prescriber 3 times consecutively, making the dosage of medication refilled without authorization 90 days total. We have asked the sponsor about this language and hope to work with them on clarifying these parts of the bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments on HB 37. As always, OSMA is appreciative of the opportunity to be a meaningful contributor to the legislative process. Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions.