



June 16, 2021

Representative Tom Brinkman, Chair
House Health Committee
77 S. High St.
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Brinkman,

On behalf of the Ohio Association of Health Plans (OAHP), thank you for the opportunity to offer written opponent testimony on House Bill 153, legislation that eliminates an important tool used to help purchasers of health care afford pharmacy care.

OAHP is the state's leading trade association representing the health insurance industry. OAHP's member plans provide health benefits to more than 9 million Ohioans through employer-sponsored coverage, the individual insurance market, and public programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and the Federal Insurance Marketplace. Our members offer a broad range of health insurance products to Ohioans in the commercial marketplace and are committed partners in public programs.

Formularies are tools for assuring the selection of medications demonstrated to be safe, effective and affordable while maintaining or improving quality patient care. These tools are even more important for purchasers of healthcare in an environment where pharmaceutical prices are dramatically increasing.

Formularies may change in a plan year because a generic equivalent comes to market, or a drug manufacturer increases the price of a drug. Not allowing a change in formulary as a result of either of these situations will lead to increased costs for employers, taxpayers, and individual purchasers of healthcare.

An Indiana bill similar to HB 153 restricted the state employee benefit program's formulary. A fiscal note on that bill stated, "the prohibitions of the bill could impact state employee health plan premiums between **\$2.3 M - \$5.2 M per year**¹."

OAHP agrees with the underlying intent of HB 153 – to ensure Ohioans have access to affordable prescription drugs. However, rather than taking important tools away from purchasers of pharmacy care, OAHP believes the Ohio General Assembly should focus its efforts on the cost of prescription drugs and empowering Ohio's employers, individual purchasers of healthcare, and taxpayers with tools to help drive down the cost of pharmacy care. For many, health care coverage is the only means of access to pharmacy care and taking

¹ <http://iga.in.gov/static-documents/3/c/1/0/3c107847/SB0097.02.COMS.FN001.pdf>

coverage tools away will do just the opposite. HB 153 will drive up the cost of pharmacy care without addressing the underlying reason that pharmaceutical costs continue to rise.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 153 on behalf of the more than 9 million Ohioans member plans provide health care coverage. We stand ready to work with policymakers to develop meaningful solutions that address the high cost of drugs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K O'Reilly". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Kelly O'Reilly
President and CEO