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Proponent Testimony, Ohio House Bill 451 (HB 451)
Ohio House Insurance Committee
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Chairman Brinkman, Vice-Chair Lampton, Ranking Member Miranda, and members of the House Insurance Committee, on behalf of the Akron Children's Hospital clinicians, staff, volunteers and families we serve, I am writing to express our support for Ohio House Bill 451, sponsored by State Representatives Manning and Oelslager.

If enacted, HB 451 would require the mutual consent between a health care provider and an insurance company to allow physician administered drugs to be purchased through and prepared by the insurer's specialty pharmacy and then shipped to a health care provider where it would then be administered to a patient. This practice is known as "white bagging."

The practice of white bagging is becoming more common as insurance providers seek to control increasing drug prices, and is no longer reserved for rarely used medications. As this practice increases, these white-bagged orders place tremendous strain on hospital drug delivery systems. Logistically, this practice is problematic for hospitals and hospital systems in their efforts to connect complex drug treatments to vulnerable patients.

Additionally, as hospitals attempt to manage white-bagged medications within their drug distribution systems, there exists more urgent concerns: patient safety and outcomes. White bagging can circumvent systems used by health care organizations to ensure patient safety. Specifically, patient outcomes can be negatively affected when medications are not ready when patients need them. Not uncommon are dosage errors, delivery delays and lost shipments. Hospitals have no quality control on fragile medications as they are prepared in an outside pharmacy and then in transit. Health care providers are accountable for the quality of care but cannot verify the integrity of medications obtained outside of the established procurement system. Further, if a white-bagged medication is not able to be administered by the intended patient for any of these reasons, the hospital cannot administer that drug to anyone else, leaving potentially life-saving treatments unused.

As one of the largest providers of pediatric health care services in Ohio, we see thousands of kids each year who are suffering from serious medical conditions that require prescription drugs to help them survive and thrive. For many of these families - including many who are your own constituents - caring for their loved ones is a constant challenge requiring significant planning and sacrifice. HB 451 is important legislation for Akron Children's Hospital as well as to the families we serve, as it removes the obstacles that white-bagging practices create.

I respectfully request that this committee favorably report Ohio House Bill 451. On behalf of our patients and families, thank you for the opportunity to share Akron Children's perspective.