

I am opposed to Senate Bill 22 because it would not allow the Director of Health to act swiftly and efficiently to threats to the public health and safety of Ohioans. The primary goal of public health is to prevent the spread of contagious or infectious disease. In many instances, the actions taken to accomplish this goal must occur immediately. OAC 3701-3-02 lists (16) diseases that are classified so dangerous to the public health, due to severity or potential for epidemic spread, that their occurrence or suspected occurrence is required to be reported to the Board of Health immediately. For over 100 years, public health has closely monitored infectious and communicable diseases to identify unexpected patterns or other indicators that may point to the emergence of a newly recognized infectious agent, outbreak, or acts of bioterrorism. Time is of the essence when dealing with agents such as Anthrax, Smallpox, SARS, and Viral Hemorrhagic Fever. The proposed measure to restrict re-issuance of public health orders for a 90-day period can directly endanger public health in matters related to new and emerging infectious agents. Public health experts must have flexibility and a sense of urgency when it is necessary to respond to rapidly evolving situations and research. The proposed Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee, with the additional consultations required with the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee, would add additional bureaucracy and be subject to political party affiliations in matters that are expressly delegated to the Governor and the Director of Health.

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic response, effective communicable disease mitigation strategies such as Isolation and Quarantine were brought to the forefront for debate and polarization and were widely misunderstood. OAC 3701-3-13 specifically outlines Isolation requirements for infected individuals during their communicability in order to prevent transmission and spread. Quarantine restricts movements of well individuals that have been exposed to a communicable disease during the period of communicability and lasts only as long as the usual incubation period of that particular disease. These strategies are largely effective when they are implemented immediately and followed throughout the duration of the public health emergency.

I urge you to NOT adopt these proposed amendments to 3701.13, 3715.74, and 4935.03 and to maintain our current Revised Code as it is currently written.

Thank you for your consideration,

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