

On behalf of the Alliance City Health Department, I write to ask that this message be submitted to the Senate Government Reform and Oversight Committee in opposition to Senate Bill 22.

The bill, as introduced, would severely restrict the authority of the Director of Health to respond in a timely and efficient way to outbreaks of communicable disease and public health emergencies that threaten the health and safety of all Ohioans.

As the public health system, both state and local, works diligently with all partners to make our way out of this once-in-a-century pandemic, the effort has and will continue to be an "all hands on deck" response. This certainly is not the time to divest the state health director of any authority that might be necessary to control the spread of this virus that has resulted in the death of over 11,000 Ohioans to date. This is the time to focus on Ohio's mass vaccination efforts, described by most experts as the most significant logistical challenge ever known.

This bill will also impact the Director's authority in times beyond the declaration of a public health emergency, such as communicable disease outbreaks that impact our local communities. Recent examples include: *Clostridium difficile* outbreaks in multiple long-term care facilities, a recent foodborne outbreak that originated in a meat packaging plant where product was shipped to many locations statewide. The Alliance City Health Department has dealt with many outbreaks over the years, which you never hear about because the current state laws provide us with the necessary tools to control the spread of these communicable diseases.

Please do not pass a bill that will hinder the Director's authority in a cumbersome legislative process that includes an oversight committee and concurrent resolutions by both chambers.

Sincerely,

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