



OHIO PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION

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**Ernest Boy, Executive Director
Ohio Pharmacists Association
Testimony for House Bill 110
May 4, 2021**

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the committee, I am Ernest Boy, Executive Director of the Ohio Pharmacists Association. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on a few of the provisions contained in House Bill 110, specifically around tobacco cessation, prescription locking vials and supplemental dispensing fees for pharmacies.

We strongly support the provision that was included in the Governor's introduced budget that allows pharmacists to take a stronger role in smoking cessation by allowing pharmacists and pharmacy interns to dispense tobacco cessation products without a prescription. We have developed specialized educational programming for pharmacists in this area, and they stand ready to help Ohioans stop smoking.

Over the years there have been numerous conversations around utilizing locking prescription vials for controlled substances. The House added a provision that would create a pilot program through the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The current language is not voluntary as we originally discussed with the proponents of the concept. We will be working with members on an amendment to ensure that the pilot program is voluntary.

Our primary concern today is to support a proposed amendment that would continue funding for the managed care supplemental dispensing fee. Pharmacies in Ohio greatly appreciated the \$30 million that was allocated in 2019 to enhance dispensing fees. I have heard from numerous independent pharmacies about the significant role that this money played in keeping them open. Since the new single pharmacy benefit manager and new reimbursement formula will not take place until sometime in 2022, we requested there be money allocated to provide enhanced dispensing fees in this budget. This funding is critical to assist pharmacies until the managed-care reforms and new reimbursement formulas take effect. The current enhanced fees will be ending in June of this year, causing pharmacies to once again have serious reimbursement issues.

The independent and chain pharmacies were critical in the vaccine rollout, and we are now trying to reduce vaccine hesitancy. We are very proud of the important role that our

pharmacists have played in the fight against COVID. Our independent pharmacies have been critical in reaching underserved areas in Ohio, and the supplemental fees are key to keeping them in business.

Thank you for considering an amendment to continue enhanced dispensing fees for pharmacists. We're proud to continue to serve the patients of Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak, I'll be happy to take questions.