

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and all members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today. On behalf of the Ohio Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (Ohio ACEP) which represents over 1,600 emergency physicians across the State, we are writing to express our thoughts on 3 proposed amendments, proposed for incorporation into House Bill 138. HB 138 is a commonsense piece of legislation that warrants passage. We want to thank the Chairman and members of the committee for additional time and consideration to vet these amendments. With the revisions made since the last hearing, our concerns with the proposals have been addressed.

AM 2570, allowing EMTs to give COVID test, we support.

AM 2081-3 will decrease the ambulance staffing minimum for non-emergency transports. We always understood the intent on this amendment, especially when the healthcare system as a whole is understaffed. This current version creates a more specific definition of what a non-emergency transport is. With this definition we believe patient care and safety is retained and we support the committee moving forward with adopting this amendment.

AM 2082-4 would retain the ability for the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire and Transportation Services (EMFTS Board) to set minimum qualifications to serve as an EMS Medical Director. It is the Medical Director's responsibility to create the protocols for all EMS providers within an agency, they approve all patient care measures performed by the certified EMS personnel, and they are also responsible for all training, continuing education and quality assurance measures of the EMS agency they oversee. It is critically important that an EMS Medical Director meets minimum standards to perform these important jobs.

This version of the amendment states that all physicians, regardless of specialty, meet the same qualifications to serve. Ohio ACEP recognizes that some EMS agencies, particularly those in rural and underserved areas, may not have access to a board-certified emergency physician to be their Medical Director and there are certainly many non-board certified EM physicians who are qualified to serve in this position. However, this version of the amendment also recognizes that physicians who completed a fellowship, which include a subspecialty in emergency medicine services, are not expected to take an additional course to demonstrate their competency.

An EMS fellowship is specifically about running an EMS organization. These physicians already have the additional training and qualifications to serve in this role. The certification course currently required of non-board certified emergency physicians is to prove competency for those physicians who have not received this specific training and education in emergency medical services. Those physicians who have taken this specialized path of emergency medicine should be considered competent to serve as Medical Directors. The latest version of the amendment recognizes this. So, with this change, we are no longer opposed to the adoption of this amendment.

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Ohio ACEP wants to specifically thank Chairman Huffman for his thoughtful and deliberative communication with our organization on these amendments. We are pleased to remove any opposition to moving forward with these proposals.

Sincerely,

Nicole Veitinger, DO, FACEP
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