

June 15, 2021

Judiciary testimony on S.B.25

Jim Volkert, BPA

Chairman Manning, Vice-chairman McColley, Ranking member Thomas and members of the committee. My name is Jim Volkert and I'm here to speak in favor of Senate Bill 25 on behalf of the Buprenorphine Providers Association. The BPA is an association of medical doctors and their staff and counselors who use MAT to treat OUD (opioid use disorder). MAT stands for Medically Assisted Treatment and uses Buprenorphine to prevent the client from experiencing withdrawal symptoms, stop craving, and blocks any euphoria or intoxication from being achieved. The client visits the clinic, has a drug screening taken, sees a counselor, and is written a prescription for buprenorphine. The success rate in this type of practice is astounding. Over 80% of people treated are enjoying recovery after two years. This all is accomplished in an Out Patient setting, allowing the client to remain at home and employed.

Our mission at the Buprenorphine Providers Association is to enlist more Doctors to help in this opioid crisis by eliminating the stigma that has been placed unfairly on Buprenorphine, allay any fears they might have about their licensing, provide board certified ongoing education and best practices methods through our broad association of professionals, and with our member website put a veteran practitioner virtually at the side of a new specialist.

Our reason for supporting this legislation is twofold. One; We have been getting complaints about trafficking activity around our member clinics for some time. At their most vulnerable, and while voluntarily doing the hard work to get into recovery, the last thing our clients need is another enticement to addiction. This is pure evil. The practice is usually carried out in the same mode, dealer does a search for OUD treatment clinics, dealer sets up shop in the vicinity of the clinic, wares include drugs and captured "clean" urine. People turning their lives around deserve a safe place for treatment and recovery.

Our second reason involves our difficulty in recruiting doctors. All of our member doctors see their OUD clients in a clinic setting, not at their private practice. This clientele is not the easiest to deal with, and doctors would rather not have them in their waiting rooms. Ensuring that the State of Ohio is doing all it can to provide them with a safe location to do the incredibly necessary and vital work they provide in this crisis can only help bring more doctors to the fight.

We have the means to start to turn the tide on this opioid tidal wave that hit our state. The BPA believes this is good step in the right direction and encourages passage of Senate Bill 25.