



**Representative Theresa Gavarone
3rd House District**

Sponsor Testimony for HB 273
Health Committee
September 20, 2017

Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present sponsor testimony for House Bill 273, also known as the Patient Access Expansion Act.

As most of you know, particularly Dr. Huffman and Dr. Johnson, the education, time and expense it takes to become a physician is extensive and exhaustive. In addition, once you earn a medical license you must complete continuing medical education (CME) to maintain it. That is not new information, but I bring it up as background for this bill.

You will hear and read testimony from doctors all around Ohio and across the country in future hearings and at that point they can provide you with as much detailed information as you can handle, but in the interest of simplicity, I am just going to go through the basics of this bill.

Maintenance of certification is a relatively new process of physician certification maintenance. Before I get started I want to say, unequivocally neither I, nor anyone I have spoken to about this issue, has a problem with a doctor needing initial board certification to practice specialized medicine. The issue becomes the burdensome requirements necessary to maintain that certification.

Every specialty board has their own requirements and regulations, but with nearly all of them, you will find the programs require significant effort to relearn material, not to help in their daily practice, rather, to pass a re-certification exam. If the doctor fails the exam then the process is set in motion for them to lose the ability to seek insurance reimbursement for services, surgical or admitting privileges in a hospital and ultimately, their employment.

I have spoken with and received dozens of emails from doctors across the state and country to get a better understanding of how their lives are impacted by the MOC requirements. In general, many are leaving their practices and families to attend conferences or seminars to satisfy the requirements. These cost a lot of money and during this time, they are not seeing patients. They also leave their practices the families to attend review sessions to help them pass the re-

certification exam. This costs a lot of money and during this time, they are not seeing patients. They then take a re-certification exam. This costs a lot of money and during this time, they are not seeing patients. (You are probably starting to see a trend here)

My sister-in-law is a practicing physician in Philadelphia. She recently had a decision to make; does she jump through all the hoops in front of her to recertify, or does she just say enough is enough and retire. Ultimately, she decided to recertify, but the fact is, doctors across Ohio and country are facing that decision every single day and many are choosing to retire or move to a state that has gotten rid of MOC. This means fewer doctors and longer wait times for patients.

Ohio faces medical professional shortages in many parts of the state. In regards to MOC requirements the question becomes, why aren't we finding more ways to encourage doctors to come practice in Ohio rather than continuing MOC requirements that leave them contemplating whether they should quit or move to the growing number of states that have implemented this same legislation?

One of the last points I want to make is that through all the research, conversations and requests for information, I have yet to see any proof whatsoever that MOC improves patient care. Why do we insist on forcing doctors to spend money and time out of their offices for requirements that do not show any improvement in patient care?

The point I really want to drive home is that the question of "should I retire or move" is one that should not cross through a doctor's mind, let alone seriously contemplated, because of MOC. We have the opportunity to combat this issue to help our constituents and I look forward to going through this process with all of you.

Chairman Huffman, thank you for allowing me the time to provide this testimony today. I am ready to answer any questions the members of the committee may have.