

Proponent testimony for HB 345

January 17, 2018

Chairman Huffman and members of the House Health Committee, my name is Jeff Bartone, the owner of Hock's Pharmacies in Vandalia and Tipp City. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my support for HB 345, Rep. Jim Butler's cures legislation. As a community pharmacist and past president the Ohio Pharmacists Association, I believe that legislation like HB 345 is a great way to help spur greater marketplace focus and investment in cures for a variety of diseases.

As a pharmacist, I can tell you that an overwhelming majority of the medications I dispense are more geared towards treating symptoms and long-term management of patient diseases. While these medicines are necessary and extremely beneficial for my patients, my fear is that from a business standpoint, those manufacturers that are making these drugs, as well as the insurers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) that pay for those medicines, may not necessarily have the same financial incentives for creation of short-term, one-time cures versus long-term, maintenance therapy.

To be clear, I do not feel that providers, manufacturers, or other members of the supply chain do not have the best interests of patients at heart, but I do believe that generally speaking, if a particular desired outcome is missing in any segment of the market, stakeholders should look towards the alignment of incentives to ensure they are structured in a way to achieve those desired outcomes. As a pharmacy owner, it shouldn't come as a surprise that a constant stream of patients is a more viable model for my business versus the alternative. The same is true for those other members of the supply chain: manufacturers, insurers, PBMs, wholesalers, and others.

I consider HB 345 not to necessarily be an indictment of the current system, but I consider it to be an enhancement and welcome reshuffling of incentives that will hopefully facilitate increased investment and development of cures.

I applaud Rep. Butler for digging into this tricky topic and his leadership on the issue. Thank you for the opportunity to give my support for HB 345, and if you have any questions, please reach me at my contact information below.

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