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Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 102
Health, Human Services and Medicaid
Chair, Senator Dave Burke
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Good afternoon, Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares and members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 102, which would require nursing homes to report outbreaks of *Clostridium difficile* also known as *C. diff*.

Clostridium difficile is a bacterium that causes inflammation of the colon, known as colitis, and produces painful and potentially deadly symptoms. People, who have other illnesses or conditions requiring prolonged use of antibiotics, and the elderly, are at greater risk of acquiring this disease. Infection and spread of *C. difficile* occurs most often after a visit to a hospital. The CDC classifies *C. difficile* infections as Hospital-Acquired Infections. Because of frequent crossover of hospital patients to skilled nursing facilities for rehabilitation or acute health issues, nursing homes are particularly prone to the spread of *C. difficile*.

People can become infected with *C. difficile* if they touch items or surfaces that are contaminated with the bacteria and then touch their mouth or mucous membranes. People and surfaces can be contaminated through touch. When the bacteria multiply in the intestine, they can overtake “good bacteria” and cause symptoms leading to fatal dehydration. A 2011 study estimated that *C. diff* kills about 29,000 Americans each year¹.

In the state of Ohio, it is only required by hospitals to report these outbreaks, not nursing homes. This bill would specifically require nursing home operators to report an outbreak of *C. diff* to the appropriate health commissioner within 48 hours after the outbreak occurs. In addition, it requires the nursing home operator to submit an annual report regarding *C. diff* outbreaks. This legislation will help protect the elderly, hospital patients, and the families and healthcare professionals who visit and care for them.

Chairman Burke and members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention and consideration of this important issue. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

1. <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1408913>