

 “Nurse Practitioners Practice from The Heart”

Dayton Family Practice

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Chair Lipps, Vice chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee thank you for giving me this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 177, which seeks to remove the standard care arrangement for Nurse Practitioners in Ohio.

  I have been a nurse practitioner for the last 20 years.  I am double board certified.  I am certified in both Women's Health, and Family.   I decided to open an independent practice three years ago when my employer at that time was heading toward bankruptcy. My practice is located in St. Clairsville, Ohio.  It has been very challenging to say the least.  With reimbursements low and taxes on the rise it is almost impossible to break even.  I have never worked so hard at a job as I have at this endeavor.  My payroll, with taxes, is about 12,000 every 2 weeks. This is with 8 employees, 4 of which are part time.  I have to see a lot of patients to be able to meet my bills.  I therefore had to hire two other NPs to help me see patients.  We never turn down a patient who is in need of medical care.  We see about 530 patients per month.  We delivery quality care, and have low hospitalization rates.  We see a lot of Medicaid patients with low reimbursements.  Most are turned down by hospital employed local doctors who have put a hold on accepting Medicaid patients.

    By the time I pay taxes, rent, payroll, malpractice, supplies, accounting fees, collaborator fees, etc., I just barely make payroll.  I must hold my paycheck every payday to make sure everyone else gets paid.  My collaborator’s fee is 1,000 dollars per month.  I am actually behind 3 months.  I believe if the collaborative agreement was removed, it would help financially all Advanced Practitioners in Ohio.

    In our local area, 3 hospitals have closed their doors in the last few months.  EORH, OVMC and Bellaire Hospital.  Having said this, most doctors either left the area, joined hospital staff, or retired.  It is not easy to find a collaborator.   I am afraid if my collaborator retires, it will be very difficult to find another one, and as is, I would not be able to practice without one.  I am not looking to expand my role, just lift the heavy financial burden of the Collaborative Agreement.  We are facing a physician shortage.

    I have a huge "collaboration" with physicians in my area.  I have most local physician personal cell phone numbers stored in my phone.  I can call any one of them, any time for advice or consultation.  With a collaborator, you are limiting your advice to only one physician’s opinion.  I feel I would rather call the specialist if I have an issue.  Most NPs are well received and have a great relationship with most doctors.  The best part about that is that there is "no charge".  This would certainly reduce another barrier to health care access.  The neighboring states such as Pennsylvania and West Virginia, where I reside, have already eliminated the requirement to have a collaborator. This bill would help the shortage of health care in the State of Ohio.

 I have been keeping abreast of this bill for several months now. I have prayed and called several politicians offices to speak with them about this important legislation only to be disappointed month after month that it is not through the process yet. I feel it is the perfect opportunity for our local politicians to speak loud and clear in support of HB 177.

    In closing, I would like to thank each member of the Ohio House Health Committee personally.   HB 177 could be a game changer in the wonderful state of Ohio.  If ever in St. Clairsville, you are welcomed to stop in and see what a fantastic practice we have!

Respectfully,

Kolleen Dayton BC-FNP, BC-WHNP