



November 9, 2020

The Honorable Scott Lipps
Chair, House Health Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Lipps,

On behalf of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, I would like to express our opposition to certain provisions contained in House Bill 443, legislation that would bring Ohio law into line with the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA).

Unfortunately, HB 443 goes beyond simply aligning state law with MHPAEA. The bill includes provisions not contained in federal law that would prohibit health insurers from utilizing both prior authorization and step therapy and would require insurers to place drugs prescribed for substance use disorder on the lowest tier of a health plan's drug formulary. It is because of the inclusion of these provisions in the bill (lines 695-706) that the Ohio Chamber opposes it.

Because average employer health insurance premiums have gone up 22 percent over the past five years and 55 percent in the past decade, health care costs are consistently a top concern for Ohio Chamber member businesses. Since the beginning of 2017, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation has conducted a quarterly survey of business leaders. In every pre-coronavirus quarterly survey, the cost of health care was the top issue of concern. Even now, during the pandemic, it is still their second biggest concern.

In an effort to combat these rising costs, health insurers utilize a variety of utilization management tools – including prior authorization, step therapy, and tiering – to help try to contain costs while still ensuring that those who need these expensive medications can receive them. Barring health insurers from being able to employ such tools, as HB 443 does, will undoubtedly lead to higher health insurance premiums.

For these reasons, we ask that HB 443 be amended to remove lines 695-706 of the bill. However, the Ohio Chamber urges opposition to the as-introduced version of HB 443. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Lake". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keith Lake
Vice President, Government Affairs

cc: Members of the House Health Committee
Rep. Phil Plummer
Rep. Allison Russo