

To: Members of the House Primary & Secondary Education Committee

Fr: Monica Hueckel, Senior Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association  
Joe Rosato, Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association

Da: June 4, 2019

Re: HB 165

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On behalf of the nearly 16,000 physician, resident and medical student members of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), we write in support of House Bill 165, which would require that the state board of education adopt either of the following no later than July 1, 2020:

1. The most recent health education standards developed by the American Association for Health Education (AAHE); or,
2. Health education standards written by the board itself based upon the standards from the AAHE.

The AAHE standards are merely an outline to follow in creating curricula for health education. These standards do not specify specific curriculum topics or teaching methods. Instead, the standards set up a framework for health education by identifying the benchmarks and outcomes for students to achieve. These include comprehension of key concepts like disease prevention, peer pressure, and risk reduction. Each standard is split into age-appropriate goals for health education at different grade levels.

It is the policy of the OSMA to support comprehensive health education programs for students in grades kindergarten through 12. Currently, Ohio is the only state that does not have statewide health education standards in place. This legislation would align Ohio with the rest of the country using a set of standards that is widely accepted in other states, and is a way to help our state equip its students with important health knowledge and awareness to build upon into adulthood.

As you have already heard from the sponsors of HB 165, Ohio is trailing behind the majority of states with regard to major health concerns such as tobacco use and development of diabetes. The first step toward building healthy habits and cultivating a healthy lifestyle is developing a strong foundation in health education. By creating a set of health education standards for schools to implement, we can empower students with crucial skills and awareness they need to help them live happier, healthier lives.

As always, the OSMA appreciates the opportunity to meaningful contributors to the legislative process. Thank you for your attention to our comments regarding HB 165, and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.