



**Proponent Testimony**  
**HB 41– Exempt mental health care providers' info from Public Records Law**

**Presented by Megan Testa, MD, President**  
Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association  
to the Ohio House Civil Justice Committee

**February 23, 2021**

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, my name is Dr. Megan Testa. I am the President of the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA), a statewide medical specialty organization representing more than 1,000 physicians who specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. I am a Forensic Psychiatrist working in Cleveland, Ohio, where I care for patients with a wide variety of mental health and substance use diagnoses, many who have dual-diagnosis.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide supportive written testimony on behalf of the OPPA regarding House Bill 41, which would exempt certain health provider person information from public records.

Individuals with mental illness and addiction are arrested and jailed at a high rate due to a number of factors including symptoms of mental illness that predispose them to arrest, such as paranoia, impulsivity and disorganized behavior, as well as criminalization of mental illness and addictions. The public relies upon mental health providers to perform evaluations of criminal defendants to determine how mental health issues may or may not have played a role, and to make recommendations on issues such as competence to stand trial, insanity, and community release, as well as to weed out individuals who are faking mental illness to escape criminal penalties. Forensic mental health providers are routinely involved in the evaluation of potentially dangerous individuals who are often displeased with the results of the evaluations. In order to ensure that they are able to perform their duties without putting their safety and the safety of their families at risk, the state of Ohio must ensure that forensic mental health providers' personal information (including their home addresses) is protected from public records searches.

We appreciate the efforts of the sponsors of HB 41 and look forward to working with you to provide access to appropriate care to the many Ohioans who struggle with mental illness in Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.