

Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio

BRIDGING THE GAP



Ohio House of Representatives
Health Committee

March 7, 2022

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on H.B. 558. My name is R. Taylor Reed and I am the Executive Director of Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio.

The Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio was founded in 2010 as a joint project of the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and Access Health Columbus in order to create a local solution to the national problem of unaffordably high medication costs. The pharmacy's primary mission is to increase access to affordable prescription medications for low-income, uninsured, and underinsured Franklin County residents who experience gaps in their insurance coverage or challenges accessing their medications. Through a multidisciplinary team of health profession students, social workers, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacists, our model of care embraces best practices of medication therapy management, patient education, and solving barriers related to the social determinants of health. We have grown to offer more than 100,000 prescriptions annually for free to Franklin County residents living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

In order for Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio to deliver on this noble mission of providing free medications to economically disadvantaged members of the community, our team of board-certified and residency-trained pharmacists work with patients and their prescribers to find solutions within our donated medication inventory. Donated medications are the last line of defense for our vulnerable patients.

Our patients include seniors living on fixed incomes who make hard choices of what to afford. With our help, they no longer decide whether to go without food or medicine, and learn that they can have both. Our patients also include hard working families who have fallen on hard times or had a health event that set them back. With access to free medicines and support from our pharmacists, we are proud to offer a hand up. As pharmacists, dedicated to the health and safety of our community, my team and I are acutely aware that failure to find an affordable, appropriate treatment solution means that these patients could go without the life-saving care they need.

At least once a week, I receive a call from a well-meaning community member who has changed medications or had a loved one pass away, and is hopeful they can donate their unused medications to our pharmacy. Often times these are unopened brand name inhalers, vials or pens of unused insulin, or another costly medicine that they had to stretch to be able to afford themselves. After listening to their offer and appreciating the spirit of generosity, I must share the news that Ohio Law does not allow our pharmacy to receive these unused but otherwise good

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medicines. At the same time, on a daily basis, a new patient arrives to our pharmacy desperate for a life-saving medicine they cannot afford. If passed, H.B. 558 will bridge this gap – allowing the excess one individual has to alleviate the scarcity another neighbor is experiencing. By increasing the supply of donated medication in our state, H.B. 558 helps ensure seniors and hard-working families who seek care from the Charitable Pharmacy are able to receive the medicines they need.

Chair Lipps and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would welcome any questions you might have at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Taylor Reed". The script is fluid and cursive.

R. Taylor Reed, PharmD

Executive Director

Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio