



*BEFORE THE HOUSE HEALTH COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 645*

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 645 (HB 645). My name is Kevin Shimp and I am the General Counsel and Director of Labor and Legal Affairs for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate, and we represent thousands of companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans. In our efforts to support economic competitiveness and growth, the Ohio Chamber supports HB 645 because it capitalizes on the use of technology and telemedicine to expand Ohioans access to pharmacy services.

The enactment of HB 645 would give Ohioans the ability to fill their prescriptions at a pharmacy where the supervising pharmacist is operating remotely. At a time when many communities throughout Ohio are experiencing local pharmacies closing, allowing the use of remote pharmacy means more Ohioans will have greater access to pharmacies and pharmacists. Expanding access to this crucial part of Ohio's healthcare system should help address health disparities and improve health outcomes for those living in the Buckeye State.

In the Ohio Chamber's Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future, we show health disparities exist amongst a variety of different populations including rural Ohioans. For example, Ohioans in rural counties have higher hospitalization rates and severely limited access to physicians when compared to the rest of Ohio. To ameliorate these disparities, the Ohio Chamber's research suggests lawmakers should consider supporting policies that expand telehealth services such as HB 645. By supporting policies that expand telemedicine services to pharmacies, lawmakers can help more Ohioans live healthier lives through better adherence to their prescription medications and more opportunities to seek healthcare services from medical professionals.

To assure patient safety and parity between remote pharmacies and the traditional pharmacy, HB 645 implements several safeguards dictating how a remote pharmacy must be staffed and the role of the supervising pharmacist. Under the legislation, the supervising pharmacist of a remote pharmacy is subject to oversight from the State Board of Pharmacy and there must be a minimum of two in-person pharmacy technicians or interns staffing the remote pharmacy.

In addition, the legislation calls for the supervising pharmacist to be physically located in Ohio and requires the supervising pharmacist to oversee the work of remote pharmacy staff. This oversight role must be accomplished through a telepharmacy and surveillance system that enables the supervising pharmacist to answer patient questions and provide instructions to staff. Moreover, the supervising pharmacist is required to verify each dispensed drug complies with the prescription before the medication leaves the store.

In closing, the Ohio Chamber urges your support of House Bill 645 because it will expand Ohioans access to pharmacies and help drive better health outcomes in the Buckeye State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today, and I welcome any questions from the committee.