

H.B. 300 Written Testimony

Jennifer Boehmer

Regarding House Behavioral Health Committee Hearing

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My name is Jennifer Boehmer, and I am the Regional Operating Director – Ohio for Community Medical Services, an OTP facility, where I bring over 10 years of healthcare experience. I am testifying **in support** of H.B. 300.

Background

The opioid epidemic continues to cause issues across America and in Ohio, as officials are continuing to search for answers. "The opioid epidemic is always on my mind and the mind of law enforcement officials, and Gov. (Mike) DeWine and others because it's still a crisis," Lt. Gov. Jon Husted said. (UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 1.5.2024). Unfortunately, overdose deaths are on the rise.

OTP providers continue to debate take-home policies and regulations. At Community medical Services, COVID-19 proved that we could increase take homes of methadone, and our clients did not experience any adverse reaction. What is interesting is that our clients saw this as an opportunity and felt grateful to have one less barrier to treatment.

The number one factor we see as a continued barrier to treatment is transportation. Current solutions are not convenient, reliable, and come with some drivers who continue to have a stigma with clients.

Solution

Community Medical Services is proud to pilot Sonara Health (Sonara remote observation of take-home methadone). We believe it can mitigate barriers and maximize safe adoption of the proposed rules.

I have witnessed how Sonara Health's remote dosing solution makes dosing easier for patients by having fewer clinic visits, while also addressing safety concerns commonly associated with take-home methadone. By allowing clients to dose at home, while being monitored by our nurses, there can be a positive impact to our clients resulting in less barriers.

The app is very simple to use. It is equally easy to monitor. Patients are provided a phone, if needed, and they record themselves taking their medication. The video is then available for their care team to review. Remote observation allows the patient more convenience to not be

in the clinic as often, giving clients the gift of time back in their day rather than having to come to the clinic. The hope is the client can utilize this time by going to work or school without worrying about an appt. There is less worry about transportation issues too. The clinic has less patients waiting in line and complaining, making it safer for those in the clinic.

Summary

I believe that the members of the House Behavioral Health Committee should pass H.B. 300. Now is the time to reduce barriers to those that are truly trying to battle their addictions and overcome their personal struggles. The Sonara program works!

Thank you for your time today.