

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide support testimony for HB 73; the Dave and Angie Patient and Health Provider Protection Act.

As contextual background, I am a registered nurse since 1981. My husband experienced chest pain and was admitted to the hospital in March 2020, the beginning of the pandemic. I was physically blocked from entering the hospital by a deputy sheriff. I could not believe family members were being separated in this time of extreme uncertainty and fear. Bob had an angiogram and was deemed to be in urgent need of cardiac bypass surgery. It was terrible to be so isolated, not to see him, touch him and leave him in the care of strangers. After surgery, and for virtually the following two years, we were extremely cautious.

I was diagnosed with COVID 19 on Saturday January 14, 2022 my husband began coughing on Sunday his COVID test was positive. On Monday morning his oxygen saturation level was dropping from his normal 94 to 96 % oxygen to high 80's. It was a national holiday; his doctor's office was closed. I contacted an integrated physician. We had a phone consult that day due to Bob having multiple comorbidities most indicative of a poor prognosis with COVID. The Doctor prescribed a variety of over the counter and prescription medications, one of which was Ivermectin. (Ivermectin, the human medication which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015). It was difficult to locate the Ivermectin. When we finally found some, the pharmacy would not allow the amount written by the physician.

The physician was extremely frustrated. She treated close to 1,000 COVID patients and not lost a single patient. It took more phone calls, precious time and stress to rectify the situation. When my husband began all the meds, the change was astounding! In less than 24 hours, he felt better and his oxygen saturations were slightly above his pre COVID baseline.

The next day, Tuesday, he went to see his local medical professional. I accompanied him and asked regarding Monoclonal antibodies. The nurse practitioner stated there were none available. She told my husband if he got worse to "go to the Emergency room." It felt like telling someone you have stage one cancer, get help when you have stage four cancer. I was frankly terrified for him. A trip to the emergency room was my last option, due to the fear of the complete isolation we experienced spring 2020 and not being able to have input to his care. I had an overwhelming sense that if he entered the hospital, he would not be leaving the hospital. Thankfully he made a complete recovery.

I am here today to request the Ivermectin or any medication should be readily available for any Ohioan prescribed to take the medication. Medications prescribed off label are frequently used, a recent example: my sister had a large kidney stone and was prescribed Flomax, a drug prescribed to treat enlarged prostate. Hence it is off label to give to a woman, but the pharmacy filled it and insurance covered the drug. I could name other medications also.

No one knows what the future holds in any respect, but there should be nothing to prevent a trained, licensed physician from ordering medications they deem appropriate. Every Ohioan should have the ability to access any legal, FDA approved medication for any future pandemic, seasonal infection or other illness that may require a treatment that is not traditionally used for that purpose. This is paramount for future possible outbreaks and pandemics.

My husband survived, and I am convinced, with my almost four decades of nursing experience , that the medications prescribed , some off label, saved his life. Let physicians treat, pharmacies dispense and people make informed decisions for their health,

. To quote Dr. John Abramson “We need to transcend our ideologies- to think of the good for our country and its people.... Medical science is a wonderful gift, but we have to use that gift wisely so that it serves the American people by providing the best and most efficient care.

Thank you very much.