

April 16, 2024

The Honorable Al Cutrona
Chairman, Ohio House Health Provider Services Committee
77 S. High Street, 13th floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Support for Ohio Senate Bill 144

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony for Senate Bill 144, a bill that would restore important access to pharmacy-based healthcare services.

Over the last three years, pharmacists, pharmacy interns, and pharmacy technicians have been providing vital healthcare services. The federal Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act granted these professionals temporary authority to provide a broader access of vaccines to individuals ages 3 years and older. This authorization has been incredibly successful, with pharmacies across the state administering millions of immunizations to children and families in just a few years.

Unfortunately, with the expiration of the federal PREP Act allowances in May of last year, these abilities have gone away. Fortunately, Senate Bill 144, which largely mirrors the PREP Act, would take the necessary steps to make broader access to vaccinations permanent and ensure that patients can continue to receive important care at their local pharmacies.

Pharmacists and technicians are integral members of the community that bring significant value to the individuals they serve. Pharmacists are trusted, highly trained health care professionals that could be a first stop on a patient's health care journey, most frequently due to availability, affordability, and/or geography. As you may know, nearly 90 percent of Americans live within 5 miles of a community pharmacy. In Ohio, Walmart and Sam's Club operate 142 pharmacies and 27 pharmacies, respectively.

Codifying pharmacists' ability to provide services authorized under the PREP Act is essential for maintaining patient access to healthcare services. Senate Bill 144 is not asking to provide any services that the pharmacy community has not already proven itself capable of delivering. It is merely a matter of codifying current practice and recognizing the essential role that they play in the communities they serve. All individuals deserve equal access to the quality, affordable health



702 SW 8th Street
Bentonville, AR 72716
Phone: (479) 273-4000
www.walmart.com

resources. Let's take this opportunity to modernize pharmacy practice and ensure that patients can continue to receive important care at their local pharmacies.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today. We respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 144.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rachael Carl".

Rachael Carl

Director, Public & Government Affairs
Walmart, Inc.