

December 6, 2023

Chairman Lampton, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Miranda, and members of the Ohio House Insurance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 156.

UC Health is an integrated academic health system serving the Greater Cincinnati region. In partnership with the University of Cincinnati, UC Health combines clinical expertise and compassion with research and teaching. As the region's only adult academic health care system, patients travel to UC Health for subspecialized, world-class care only we can provide. We are innovators, relentless in our pursuit of the best in medicine, and able to care for the most complex and critically ill patients. We hold the highest standard of patient care, clinical research, and medical education.

Our patients at UC Health seek care at our facilities because of the high-quality devotion and compassion our clinicians provide. Many of these patients who are suffering from cancer, autoimmune, and other genetic diseases require customized medication regimens that in many instances, may need to be adjusted at the time of treatment. For example, factors that can impact a change in a patient's medication dose can include a change in the patient's weight, renal function, and numerous laboratory and biological markers. With UC Health Pharmacy Services, we can make those alterations without delay, ensuring our patients are receiving the proper care at the proper time with proper monitoring of their medication's efficacy and safety.

However, many of our patients' insurers are implementing the practice known as "white bagging" that prevents our doctors, pharmacists, and nurses from providing this high level of care in our facilities. The "white bagging" of prescription drugs is the practice where an insurance company forces a patient to receive their medication from the insurer's owned pharmacy or another pharmacy contracted with the insurer and not located at the site of patient care. The medication must be ordered from the insurers' designated pharmacy and then delivered to the hospital for our teams to administer to the patient. Additionally, because white bagged medications are sent to a hospital pharmacy through different transportation pathways, the hospital cannot always guarantee the integrity of the drug. Therefore, if a patient experiences a lack of efficacy or adverse event due to the medication, the hospital may be held liable for the medication instead of the insurer's designated pharmacy who actually dispensed the medication.

White bagging drugs for patients can cause the following problems that negatively impact patient care and safety:

- **Timeliness of Medication Access**
 - Our clinicians and patients rely on a medication to arrive on time for the patient's visit. If the drugs do not arrive on time, that patient are not able to receive care when they arrive for their appointment. This causes unnecessary delays in care, potentially disease progression, and places an unneeded burden upon the patient and their caregivers, who in some cases, have traveled significant distances to receive their treatment.

- **Medication Errors and Waste**
 - As mentioned earlier, patients may need their medication dosage adjusted at the time of their visit. When a drug is white bagged, only that specific drug form can be used for that patient. If a patient requires less than the white bagged drug amount, the remaining dosage of the drug is wasted. Further, if a patient needs a higher dosage than that received from the insurer's pharmacy, the patient cannot receive the care they need. It is important to note that the exact same drug is available on campus at UC Health's pharmacies with much less potential for waste or concern for not having enough product.
 - The white bagging process requires a seamless delivery of medication to a hospital for the patient to receive care. Many of the drugs needed for our patients must be temperature controlled and treated with immense care. By requiring a drug to be shipped to a patient's hospital, the process introduces another variable of unneeded risk to the drug's viability.
- **Higher out-of-pocket costs for patients.**
 - In many instances, the practice of white bagging removes the payment for these vital medications from a patient's medical benefit and places the coverage in a patient's pharmacy benefit. Typically, patients face higher co-pays and deductibles for drugs covered under a pharmacy benefit plan when compared to a patient's medical benefit plan.

The white bagging process creates risks for patients and providers. While UC Health generally prohibits the practice of white bagging medications in our facilities; unfortunately, insurers are mandating this practice for their beneficiaries which places patients and their care in a conundrum.

House Bill 156 will continue to protect the sanctity of the patient and provider relationship, including the management of their medications, by allowing doctors and patients to decide how the patient will receive their medications instead of insurers. Ohio is placing patient care at the forefront of this important issue. We strongly support House Bill 156 and respectfully request the Ohio House Insurance Committee favorably report this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 156. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



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