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Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 104.

Surgical smoke results from destruction of tissue by lasers and electrosurgical devices. Over 500,000 healthcare workers are exposed to harmful surgical smoke each year. Not only can surgical smoke interfere with the surgeon's view of the surgical site, it has also been shown to contain viruses, bacteria, toxic gases, blood fragments, and cellular material. In some cases, medical professionals have even documented Human Papillomavirus (HPV) transmission through surgical smoke. This legislation seeks to protect these workers and their patients by requiring Ohio's hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers to adopt and implement a policy designed to prevent human exposure to surgical smoke.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), short-term symptoms resulting from inhalation of surgical smoke can include irritation, headache, cough, and asthmatic reactions. Furthermore, studies by Dr. Kay Ball of Otterbein University demonstrate that operating room nurses report about twice the instances of respiratory health complications as the general population. To combat these hazards, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and Dr. Ball recommend using equipment designed to capture, filter, and eliminate surgical smoke before it makes contact with the eyes or respiratory tract of individuals. Small, portable evacuation and filtration devices are typically employed in hospitals to accomplish this goal.

House Bill 104 will provide overdue protection to operating room staff and patients in our state. With our world-class medical institutions, Ohio is a destination state for surgeries, and it is imperative that we uphold the highest standards of purity in our operating rooms. 11 other states have enacted similar legislation, and a growing number of legislatures around the country are hearing surgical smoke bills. Ohio must continue to lead the country in health care quality and innovation and enact this legislation now.

Thank you for hearing my testimony on the importance of House Bill 104. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.