



Chairman Mathews, Vice Chairman Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony regarding House Bill 452 on behalf of the undersigned organizations. The physician community is united in the effort for the Ohio legislature to address violence against healthcare providers. We believe HB 452 takes meaningful steps in that effort.

We understand that patients often seek healthcare during a difficult time and might have heightened emotions or frustrations, but assaulting, physically or verbally, the providers there to help should never be accepted. Healthcare providers must feel empowered and supported in reporting these incidents to their employer. The bill requires that a reporting system be in place and ensures that adverse actions cannot be taken against a physician for making that report. Not only will this provision empower providers to tell their stories, but it will also allow hospitals to track the attacks against their workers in a more formal way. Only when we know the true scope of the problems can we work to eliminate the risk to our physicians. Many times, physicians, particularly those who work in higher-risk settings, feel they have to “just take” a certain level of abuse. This is unacceptable.

The harrowing stories and statistics you have heard from physician testimony today illustrate the urgent need for action. Violence against healthcare workers contributes to burnout and results in providers leaving the field. Some are injured in such a manner that it forces them out of practice. The bill requires that all hospitals develop a security plan and requires there be a person on-site who is trained in de-escalation in high-risk areas like the emergency department and psychiatric departments. If a person exhibiting aggressive behavior can be de-escalated, we can avoid disaster. The bill also requires that direct patient care providers be involved in creating these security plans. Direct care providers must be engaged in finding solutions and strategies for addressing violence against healthcare workers.

We thank Representatives White and Baker for introducing House Bill 452 and thank the committee for your consideration.

Academy of Medicine of Cincinnati
Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio
American College of Emergency Physicians, Ohio Chapter
Montgomery County Medical Society
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Ohio Association of Rheumatology
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Ohio Chapter of the American College of Cardiology
Ohio Dermatological Association
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association
Ohio State Medical Association