Ohio Chapter

June 26th, 2019

Greeting —

On behalf of the nearly 3,000 members of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing to you to share our perspective on items being discussed by the House Bill 166 Conference Committee. Earlier this year, Governor DeWine unveiled an ambitious, pro-kids agenda that made significant investments in child health and wellness.

During consideration in the House and Senate, legislators retained these investments and in many cases increased funding or added strong policy provisions that would have positive effects on Ohio kids. Overall, we believe that HB 166 will have a beneficial impact to Ohio’s greatest resource. That being said, we wanted to take the time to offer some suggestions for specific items of difference between the House and Senate versions of HB 166—

**INSCD9 and MCDCD55 – Health Care Price Transparency**

*Senate Version*

For several years, we have been debating various approaches to providing patients with access to cost information. Health care price transparency is a national movement and many Ohio hospitals and physician offices have implemented programs to respond to patient requests for cost estimates. It is important that we adopt policies that are practical for providers of all types. We support the Senate version of this provision as it will create a meaningful, yet workable standard for price transparency.

**INSCD4 – Telemedicine Services**

*Senate Version*

Governor DeWine included telemedicine parity language in his budget proposal and we appreciate the Senate restoring this language. Telemedicine is an important technology for health care delivery and we believe it can help deliver care to underserved portions of the state. We support the Senate version of this provision and encourage the committee to retain this language.

**INSCD7 – Reimbursement for Out-of-Network Emergency Care**

*Senate Version*

Nationally, the United States Congress and the Trump Administration are working to craft a solution to surprise billing; many states have also adopted laws to do the same. Both chambers offered solutions to this challenge that would protect patients, however we believe that the Senate version also provides additional support for providers.

**TAXCD27 – Age for Purchase of Tobacco and Nicotine Products**

*House Version*

Each chamber of the Ohio General Assembly acted to preserve and strengthen Governor DeWine’s proposal to increase the age of purchase for tobacco and nicotine products. However, we support the House version of this provision as it would take effect earlier. Given the sharp rise in teen and adolescent smoking and vaping, we should act quickly to enact this common sense policy.

**TAXCD74 – Tax on Vapor Products**

*Senate Version*

We have long argued that vapor and nicotine products should be taxed in a comparable manner to cigarettes and other tobacco products. The Senate version of HB 166 clarifies that
these products are to be taxed at a rate that will be similar to taxes assessed on cigarettes. We strongly support this language and encourage its preservation.

**JFSCD45 – Temporary Child Hosting**

*House Version*

The Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is a proponent of Senate Bill 6, however we feel that the General Assembly should consider this legislation outside of the budget process. We understand that there are some potential amendments being discussed for SB 6 that would strengthen oversight of host families and mandate reporting to the state in certain circumstances. We feel these are positive changes that should be made and therefore encourage this provision to be removed to allow for the interested party process to continue.

**EDUCD135 – Student Immunization at Private Schools**

*Senate Version*

We strongly support pro-immunization policy and have led the charge in recent years to pass laws that have improved Ohio’s immunization rates. Despite this progress, Ohio remains in the minority of states that still allow exemptions to our statewide immunization requirements for nonmedical reasons. This is a debate for another day, but we strongly encourage the committee to retain language added in the Senate that allows private schools to set their own immunization requirements. This issue stems from a private religious school whose religious freedom was being infringed upon by anti-vaccine parents. In general, the legislature has granted private schools autonomy and we feel this provision is in line with past bills that recognize the independence of private schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If we can be of any assistance during your deliberations, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Melissa Wervey Arnold
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics