



**Andrea Boxill, Deputy Director of the Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team  
Proponent Testimony  
House Bill 4  
Ohio Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
April 15, 2015**

Good morning Chairwoman Jones, Ranking Minority Member Tavares and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to offer proponent testimony for House Bill 4. This legislation provides a vital tool which will ultimately save lives in the midst of the opiate crisis both here in Ohio and nationally.

Ohio's overdose death rate continues to be too high, with an increase of 366 percent in the number of deaths from 2000 to 2012. In 2012, there were 1,272 deaths due to an opioid overdose. Approximately two-thirds of all drug overdoses in 2012 involved an opioid. These aren't just statistics - these are people. These are our family members, our loved ones, and the individuals that will shape Ohio's future.

One way to have an impact on reducing overdose death is to make naloxone, a drug that immediately reverses the effect of an opiate overdose, more available to first responders, family, friends, and individuals who are fighting addiction. House Bill 4 proposes to accomplish that by allowing a physician through a local health district or on their own to establish the authority for a pharmacist or pharmacy intern to dispense naloxone without a prescription under certain circumstances and with instruction on its use. It is only logical to take this next step to enhance the availability of naloxone, as its positive impact has already been proven in Ohio.

**Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided with Naloxone)**

In 2012, Ohio Department of Health's Violence and Injury Prevention Program allocated support and technical assistance to initiate Project DAWN, starting in Portsmouth, the epicenter of Ohio's epidemic. Project DAWN is an opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution program. Program participants are educated on the risk factors of opioid overdose, how to recognize an opioid overdose, and how to respond to an opioid overdose by calling 911, giving rescue breaths, and administering nasal naloxone. Participants are given free naloxone kits containing 2 vials of naloxone hydrochloride medication.

## Senate Bill 57 (Manning) and House Bill 170 (Johnson, Stinziano) - 130<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

SB 57 and HB 170 both expanded access to naloxone by allowing law enforcement and emergency personnel to carry naloxone and have civil immunity when it is administered, starting with a pilot program in Lorain County and then expanded statewide. HB 170 also allows for naloxone to be prescribed to a friend, family member or other individuals who are in a position to provide assistance to an individual who with reason to believe is at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose.

The impact of Senate Bill 57 was felt almost immediately, making the decision to expand access to naloxone statewide an easy one. Less than a month after the Lorain County pilot was up and running, 21 people overdosed as a result of a deadly batch of heroin that was laced with fentanyl, something that we are seeing all too often. First responders administered naloxone 16 times. Over the year of the Lorain County pilot, there were a total of 69 administrations with 63 known reversals and only two deaths. Clearly, without this life saving medication, the death rate would have been much higher. Due to the enactment of Senate Bill 57 and House Bill 170, the state has experienced increased access to naloxone and lives are being saved, giving people a chance a treatment and recovery.

### Funding Investment for Naloxone

The Governor's proposed budget (HB 64) for OhioMHAS includes \$500,000 annually to enhance access to naloxone. This investment is in response to the growing demand and rising price of naloxone, as well as the future potential of House Bill 4 to further increase demand. By partnering with other stakeholders, such as ODH's Project DAWN, ADAMH and local health boards, the Board of Pharmacy, the Attorney General, and law enforcement, these funds will be used to enhance access across the state, reduce preventable deaths, and encourage people to enter treatment.

### Support for HB 4

HB 4 will build upon the existing efforts to provide access to naloxone and save lives. This will help save an individual that is suffering from a terrible addiction and potentially connect them with treatment. The experience of seeing death and being saved often is the moment of clarity the individual needs to seek treatment and motivation to improve other aspects of their life as well. Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services is committed to providing resources to help save lives because every life counts.

Chairwoman Jones and members of the committee, I thank you very much for your time and attention. OhioMHAS commends Representatives Sprague and Rezabek, as well as the General Assembly as a whole, for your efforts to fight this epidemic on all fronts and urges your support for the bill. I am happy to answer any questions that the committee may have at this time.