



Michigan Consumers for Healthcare

Chairman Cotter and distinguished members of this committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony expressing our concerns on HB5958.

As a coalition of consumer advocates focusing on access to quality and affordable healthcare, we feel that HB5958 could jeopardize access to healthcare and healthcare services to many of Michigan's citizenry. Focusing only on access to healthcare and health care services, this legislation could encourage healthcare providers to withhold treatment from people solely based on an argument of religious beliefs. Examples could include:

- The refusal to fill certain prescriptions
- Perform certain medical procedures
- Refusal to treat certain conditions
- Refuse to treat certain people and or populations

Other concerns would be the inability of consumers to know in advance who would be willing, and in some cases, who would not be willing to treat them in the case of an emergency. According to the Office of Management and Budget, only 26 of Michigan's 83 counties are considered Metro counties. The further north one travels, limitations increase to health care facilities. If a person finds themselves in a position of needing care, they may have to travel great distances in order to find treatment.

On a personal note, I am a trained and certified medical first responder. If this legislation is passed as drafted, it would give people such as me the ability to withhold non-life threatening medical attention merely based on a "religious belief" as well as provide a viable defense for my actions. One point that is extremely important to make is that an injury or illness that is non-life threatening at the point of contact with the patient may become life threatening within a very short period of time if not treated accurately or within an acceptable time frame.

Ours is a nation is a nation that is comprised of laws as well as equal access to required services for all of our citizens. We strive for *liberty and justice for all people including those with beliefs other than our own*. There will always be a tension as to how to achieve these momentous goals as well as ensuring all citizens equal access to services guaranteed to them under the United States Constitution. However, this bill does not guide us in that direction and potentially creates a greater divide in achieving these goals.

We strongly urge this committee to evaluate the un-foreseen consequences this bill may have on the people of this great state as well as your own family and loved ones.

Thank you once again for your time and allowing me to express our concerns with HB5958.

Sincerely,

Brett Williams
Central Michigan Coordinator
Michigan Consumers for Healthcare