



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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March 23, 2021

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Office of the Governor
The Ohio Statehouse
78 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43212

Dear Governor DeWine:

Hamilton County Public Health thanks you for your opposition and veto of Senate Bill 22. We stand firmly behind your decision and strongly urge the Ohio Legislature to not pursue a legislative override.

As we have seen repeatedly during the past year, the ability of public health to act proactively and decisively to fight the spread of infectious disease saves lives and reduces suffering. Separation and isolation of patients identified as infectious, regardless of disease, enables public health to quickly and effectively mitigate life-threatening health situations, not to mention myriad other diseases and issues that might pose future threats. One need only compare the statistics gleaned from the SARS-CoV-2 virus between those states that implemented proactive health practices vs. those that acted less decisively.

Not only has COVID-19 caused us to learn a great deal about public health mitigation practices, but it has also opened eyes to the value of public health as it relates to many diseases and other potential threats to our well-being. For instance, we consistently hear of Ebola virus breakouts on the African continent. It is frightening to consider what an Ebola outbreak might look like in Ohio without the ability of public health to quickly intercede.

Hamilton County Public Health is the tuberculosis control agent for our County. Perhaps the most significant reason that tuberculosis is not nearly as prominent as it is within other cultures is the work of public health. Our work to identify and isolate patients would be severely limited without the ability to implement basic public health practices.

The post-9/11 world has introduced us to various terrorist practices, such as introduction of biological agents into our air, food and water supplies. Without the provision for public health to quickly implement mitigation practices, the illness and death tolls could be enormous.

The work that we in public health perform every day – food safety, vector control, waste regulation, etc. – could quickly become overwhelming health crises without the ability to issue protective orders and implement safe practices. Outbreaks of foodborne illness, disease outbreaks such as measles, mosquito-borne illness such as West Nile Virus – all of these and more could quickly spiral out of control without public health intervention.



Healthy choices. Healthy lives. Healthy communities.

As public health practitioners, we must maintain the power to quickly and effectively implement public health practices. Without these abilities, we risk taking giant steps back in the public health measures we have been able to achieve as a society. These include elimination of diseases such as smallpox; near-elimination of measles; the infrequency in which we see tuberculosis compared to other countries; the safety of our food and water supplies in relation to other societies – the list is endless.

In summary, public health has come a long way in the last century. We often say that you can judge a society's advancement by its implementation of public health practices. We appreciate your effort to maintain the basic ability of public health to intervene, as necessary to respond to public health threats. It is precisely this ability that has enabled us to reach the health levels evident in the United States, as opposed to those cultures without strong public health infrastructure.

Thank you for your veto of SB 22.

Sincerely,



Greg Kesterman
Health Commissioner
Hamilton County Public Health