

Candidate Questions

Michael Fletcher, State Senate District 30

1) Ohioans receive the best health care when physicians serve as the leader in a team approach to medicine. Physicians are trained and licensed to provide comprehensive patient assessment and diagnosis and may order x-rays, chest scans, perform surgeries, and have full prescriptive authority. Physician extenders such as physician assistants, advanced practice registered nurses, physical therapists, and other providers have less education and training than physicians. However, organizations and lobbyists supporting physician extenders often pursue legislation granting access to patients that reach beyond their education and training, endangering patient care.

Would you support legislation that extends the scope of practice rights for physician extenders that would allow them to evaluate, test and treat patients without physician supervision? No

Comments: The expanded scope of practice makes good sense. It seemed a good idea then and now if done with appropriate training and medical supervisor oversight. Even indirect supervision is better than no supervision. I'll allow that there might be some exceptions.

2) HB 177, which would remove the collaboration agreement between APRNs (advanced practice registered nurses) and physicians, is being considered in the House Health Committee. The bill effectively allows independent practice authority for APRNs. Unfortunately, HB 177 jeopardizes optimum care by circumventing the physician-led, team-based approach.

Would you support or oppose HB 177? Oppose

Comments: I believe the team-based approach and some level of supervision still make the most sense and provides the best patient safety standard.

3) Medicaid providers care for those most in need of health care services. The state's Medicaid system has endured fluctuating federal funding the last several years. Far too often, budget savings are proposed through cuts to Medicaid provider rates. These huge cuts would restrict access to health care for those who cannot seek treatment elsewhere.

As a legislator, would you support or oppose Medicaid provider rate cuts? Oppose

Comments: Everything I've read tells me that Medicaid services are already the most efficiently priced. We need to expand the availability of those services and that means keeping provider compensation adequate to justify those expanded services. Cutting compensation would fly in the face of an economy that appears poised for more price inflation.

4) **As our state continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, do you support the following to help slow the spread of the virus?**

- Masks/facial coverings: Yes
- Physical/social distancing: Yes
- Limited indoor gatherings: Yes
- A CDC-approved vaccine: Yes

5) **Generally, do you support vaccines and immunizations as a way of preventing disease? (Examples: Hepatitis B, measles/mumps/rubella, polio, etc.) Yes**

Comments:

6) The Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine (OU-HCOM) is the state's largest medical school. OU-HCOM now graduates 1,000 osteopathic physicians every four years. Further, OU-HCOM consistently maintains the highest in-state residency program match rate of the seven medical schools in Ohio. Now more than ever, osteopathic physicians are providing and benefiting health care throughout the state.

To that end, will you protect state funding for OU-HCOM as a means to benefit health access and provide quality health care in Ohio? Yes

Comments:

7) Do you know a DO? If so, who are they and how are you connected to them?

I have known several DO physicians. My personal physician list includes multiple DO. I did retirement planning for several DO physicians in the OU-HCOM system and I count several as friends and acquaintances. To name a couple: Wayne Carlson, Barbara Singer, Charles Steiner, Anthony Chila,